

Tuesday December 31 1996

Table of exchange rates for various countries including Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, etc.

The Guardian INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

48,748

Has privatisation undermined the National Grid?

Publishing: will Frances Coady triumph?

Education

Sir Paul arises and Sir Andrew rises as showbiz glitter is sprayed over New Year honours



Former Beatle Paul McCartney, knighted in a list laden with headline-grabbing potential

Outrage at German 'meddling'

Kinkel riles Tory Euro-sceptics

THE German government yesterday described the forthcoming British general election as "a fateful decision for Europe" and demanded that whichever party wins must make up its mind about British policy towards the European Union.

currency and other crucial issues on the 1997 EU agenda. "At the moment, it has to be realised, Great Britain is in a difficult situation politically. But that will pass," he told Der Spiegel magazine.

Michael White Political Editor THE composer Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber becomes a lord this morning and Paul McCartney, his cheerier rival in Britain's flourishing musical export market, becomes Sir Paul as part of a 1,085-name New Year's Honours list sprinkled with show business glitter.

and pillar of the MCC establishment, may be John Major's own nostalgic choice, as could Frankie Vaughan, the 1950s pop idol whose CBE is for youth work.

took him to the Referendum Party conference in October. "You are hurting us, Freddy. You are damaging us," Mr Major later told him.

Honour bound

Table listing honorees in various categories: Literature, Theatre, Arts and the media, Sport, and others.

US sets up historic deal over Hebron

Israel and Palestinian negotiators said last night that a deal on the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank town of Hebron was close, after nearly nine months of bitter dispute.

Hebron since March, when the Palestinian Authority president, Yasser Arafat, Palestinian officials said troops would leave Hebron a week after the leaders met.

for a joint armed presence at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in the centre of Hebron, where Jews and Arabs pray.

There are 52 Jewish families in Hebron, surrounded by about 100,000 Palestinians. Noam Arnon, their spokesman, said that the town would become worse than "a ghetto in the Middle Ages".

Mr Netanyahu's chief policy adviser, David Bar-Ilan, said a deal would be possible if the Palestinians dropped demands

The Guardian's Alan Rusbridger has been voted Britain's most respected editor in a Mori survey of 34 of the country's leading editors.

Inside Britain

World News

Finance

Sport

Comment and Letters 9; Obituaries 10

Crossword 15; Weather 16 Radio 16; TV 16

SWIFTCALL advertisement featuring a globe and text: LOW COST INTERNATIONAL PHONE CALLS. A minimum pre payment of £25 entitles you to £25 of Swiftcall talktime...



Sketch

Supermodels strut their stuff



Stuart Millar

FIVE days after Christmas and the children are already bored with their new toys. But for thousands of big kids yesterday the fun was just beginning.

In an atmosphere thick with pipe smoke and the smell of engine grease, earnest-looking enthusiasts contentedly tinkered with their model trains, staged mock gunboat battles and absent-mindedly picked super glue from under tobacco-stained nails.

Alas, young talent such as Lewis has become rare, as competition in the hobby market has expanded with the development of ever more sophisticated technology. If railways represent the nostalgic past of modelling, then the future lies with the motor car — high-powered, four-wheel drive, remote control car racing to be exact.

Around a giant racing circuit, a large noisy crowd of youngsters watched as William Mitcham, a 21-year-old farm manager from Suffolk, this is not so much a hobby as a professional sport. "When I was 10 I bought a magazine about model cars. From something that started as a very small hobby, it has now almost become a full-time job."

Now sponsored by a model car manufacturer, he spends much of the year competing in glamorous locations around the world. "It is a big money industry, but when I tell people about it, they think we are either big kids or car racers who couldn't cut it in real cars."

For 15-year-old Graham Rose, a spectator from Finchley, north London, nothing could be further from the truth. "It's the business. Video games are good, but this is the real thing."

Review

The agony and the execrable

Stephen Moss

On Our Own  
Anne Atkins (Sceptre, £5.99)

IT'S easy to make fun of Anne Atkins, but that shouldn't stop us. Scourge of sodomites, abortionists and woolly liberals everywhere, in the three months since her assault on gay Christians on Thought for the Day she has become the mouthpiece of right-thinking Middle Englanders through her dual role as Daily Telegraph agony aunt and resident moralist.

She is married to a vicar, sacrificed her acting career to be a wife and mother, and, famously, has only slept with one man. She also writes novels and her second, On Our Own, is about to be published in paperback.

Does one review the novel or attempt to deconstruct the philosophy? The former is more proper but, when the book is this bad, not very profitable.

Ms Atkins may be a suspect agony aunt — cold baths and Christian commitment seem to be the answer to most problems — but as a writer, she has one problem: an almost complete inability to write.

The plot concerns a family crisis, wife battering and the murder of the husband. Did the wronged wife do it? That conundrum has to sustain our interest for 320 pages. There is an extraordinary amount of padding; a spurious super-structure concerning a writer who is planning a book on Mozart and lots of tedious detail about life in Cambridge — the murder victim is the chemistry master at King's College. But

In the New Year Guardian

The shape of things to come: What will 1997 hold? A Labour election victory? A black Pope? An American landing on Mars? We sum up the prospects, predict developments and identify the movers and shakers for the coming year.

Foreign Office welcomes concessions offered to lawyer appointed by Britons accused of murder

Boost for Saudi trial nurses

Kathy Evans

THE two British nurses accused of murder in Saudi Arabia appointed a prominent English-speaking Saudi lawyer yesterday but there were conflicting reports on what role he might be allowed to play in court.

The kingdom's London ambassador, Dr Ghazi Alqasbi, said the lawyers would be granted access to them in prison and would be allowed to attend the court hearings. Interpreters could also be present.

The Foreign Office immediately welcomed the ambassador's statement. "If an exception is to be made, then obviously we will welcome it," a spokesman said.

Legal circles in Saudi Arabia maintained it was highly unusual for lawyers to be present in criminal cases in the Sharia courts. "Judges are usually very suspicious of lawyers and they normally do not attend," one criminal lawyer said yesterday.

The case of the two British nurses, Lucille McLanchlan and Deborah Parry, is rapidly becoming a major diplomatic problem between London and Riyadh. Resentment is growing among Saudi officials over British fears that the nurses might not receive a fair trial. British officials yesterday hastened to dampen

such perceptions. "We should be careful not to assume that because their procedures are completely different, they are necessarily unjust," said Britain's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Andrew Green.

It was still unclear, however, what the nurses' lawyer would be allowed to do in court. He will not be able to cross-examine Saudi police officers; that is the prerogative of the judge. "What Islamic law does not allow is for lawyers to make clever tactical arguments to defend their clients. They will only be allowed to give the women's version of events," a leading Islamic jurist, Dr Zaki Badawi said.

In a recent murder case involving an American, a Jewish-based lawyer was allowed to attend the court, but only in the capacity of a translator. The judge concerned asked why an American should be granted special treatment.

Prison officials allowed a British consular official to see the women for 15 minutes each in a central police station in Dhahran yesterday. They said they were being treated well. "They are naturally anxious about the charges but bearing up well," Mr Green said.

Saudi press coverage of the case continued unabated. Yesterday, Al Hayat newspaper reported that the alleged quarrel involving the three

nurses took place in the early hours of December 12 when all three women were wearing pyjamas.

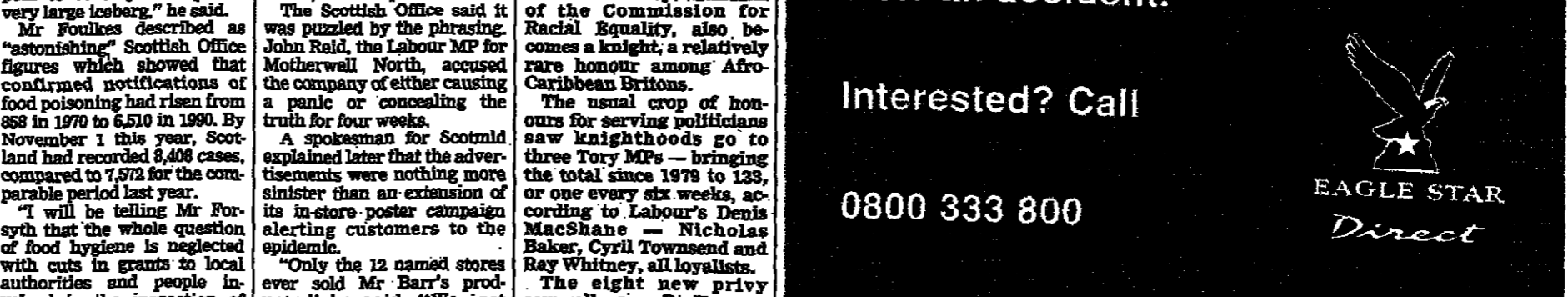
The pre-trial reporting of the case, leaked by high-level Saudi police officials, is unprecedented in the kingdom. Journalists have never been allowed to report on individual cases, or attend trials, and usually the first news of a major crime is only issued after the execution is carried out. Speculation is growing among journalists that the Saudi authorities may be trying to sour British public opinion about the character of the two nurses in advance of a trial verdict.

The organisation Fair Trials Abroad said yesterday that the deluge of prejudicial reports in the Saudi papers constituted grounds for a mistrial.

"If any British paper reported such details, they would be liable for contempt very quickly. There has been a deliberate poisoning of the public mind by a fundamentally flawed trial by any basic rules of justice," the organisation's spokesman, Stephen Jakobi, said yesterday.

According to Saudi press reports, the two nurses have confessed to the accidental killing of Yvonne Gilford. The Australian nurse was stabbed four times, battered with a hammer and smothered, the Saudi media reported.

PHOTOGRAPH: BILL GRAHAM



The A260 between Folkestone and Canterbury in Kent was closed yesterday due to snow and ice, which have caused treacherous conditions for drivers

Drivers warned as heavy snow predicted in the south

Wreck Chaudhary

BRITAIN is set to welcome the new year in temperatures of around -4C in most parts of the country, with heavy snow expected in many areas, particularly in the south and east.

The cold snap, which has killed at least 90 people in Europe in recent days, is expected to last at least until the weekend. Motorist organisations have warned drivers to take extra precautions, particularly those living in southern England.

"There is a 70 per cent chance of snow in the (south) region in the next 24 hours, so we are warning people only to travel if they have to, and to take sensible precautions," said an AA spokesman.

Roads in Kent have been particularly affected by the cold snap with black ice and drifting snow causing problems for motorists. In some parts of the county more than 1 1/2 inches of snow have fallen.

Crisis, the charity for the homeless, is to keep 11 of its Christmas shelters open until the end of the week because of the severe cold weather.

In Europe the cold has caused transport chaos from Moscow to the Mediterranean. The Venice lagoon has frozen over, and in the Caucasus mountains, southern Russia, avalanches have trapped up to 300 people and their vehicles in a tunnel for days.

In Romania, more than 20 people froze to death in blizzards, according to official sources. Unofficial reports said 24 — mainly elderly, homeless, and beggars — had died in Bucharest alone.

Bulgaria was also badly hit by cold-related deaths, with nine people found frozen in snow storms on Sunday, bringing the toll there

to 19 since Christmas Eve. Poland reported its coldest weather for 10 years, with 17 deaths recorded in the past week.

The harsh conditions extended as far south as the Valencia region, near Spain's Mediterranean coast, where a 54-year-old man was found dead from the cold in a makeshift shack at the weekend. The Mediterranean island of Corsica suffered its heaviest snowfall in a decade at the weekend, with 10,000 people left without electricity.

Two young snowboarders reported lost on the 4,084ft Cairngorm mountain in Scotland were recovering at home yesterday, writes Eriand Clouston.

Schoolboys Peter Lawlor, aged 16, and Neil Thomson, aged 17, were stranded on the mountain for 24 hours. They had become lost in Sunday's midday mist after venturing off-piste in search of more demanding slopes.

They were picked up by an RAF helicopter as they began a five-mile walk to the nearest telephone. John Allen, leader of the Cairngorm mountain rescue team, said the boys could consider themselves lucky to be alive.

Weather, G2, page 16

Food poisoning inquiry urged

Eriand Clouston

AN MP yesterday demanded an investigation into the accelerating incidence of Scottish food poisoning as controversy continued over the outbreak of E. coli infection which has killed 16 people.

George Foulkes, Labour MP for Carrick, Dumfries and Galloway, said he would ask the Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, to widen the inquiry into the epidemic to look at an overall food poisoning rate that could reach 10,000 cases this year.

"It seems to me that there is an epidemic of food poisoning in Scotland, and that the E. coli outbreak, although the most disastrous, would appear to be only the tip of a very large iceberg," he said.

Mr Foulkes described as "astounding" Scottish Office figures which showed that confirmed notifications of food poisoning had risen from 858 in 1970 to 6,510 in 1990. By November 1 this year, Scotland had recorded 8,408 cases, compared to 7,572 for the comparable period last year.

"I will be telling Mr Forsyth that the whole question of food hygiene is neglected with cuts in grants to local authorities and people involved in the inspection of premises," Mr Foulkes said.

Earlier, alarm had spread across central Scotland when the Scottish chain unexpectedly took space in two newspapers to urge customers who

had bought "cold meat, cooked pies, bakery goods or uncooked sausages" before November 25, and frozen them, to return them to their nearest store.

The general nature of the appeal suggested that all Scotland's 61 stores could have sold on the Wishaw butcher's meat products linked to the food poisoning outbreak suspected by last night of infecting 409 people, 16 of them fatally. The original list of 80-plus outlets named only 12 Scottish addresses.

The implication clearly surprised the Lanarkshire Health Board. "The information that we published was based on information supplied by the butcher, John Barr, and extracted from a detailed examination of his books," said a spokesman.

The Scottish Office said it was puzzled by the phrasing. John Reid, the Labour MP for Motherwell North, accused the company of either causing a panic or concealing the truth for four weeks.

A spokesman for Scotmid explained later that the advertisements were nothing more sinister than an extension of its in-store poster campaign alerting customers to the epidemic.

"Only the 12 named stores ever sold Mr Barr's products," he said. "We just wanted to make sure we covered every angle. People maybe missed the original notices, and anyway, how many people always know what they have in their freezer?"

McCartney and Lloyd Webber top bill in glitter honours list

continued from page 1

Chant, chief of the embattled Child Support Agency, becomes a Companion of the Bath.

As the list was published at midnight, Labour pointed out that four new knights with voluntary service achievements — training specialist Peter Davis, Graham Ogden, chairman of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, David Rowland, chairman of Lloyds, and Michael Pickard, of the London Docklands Development Corporation — are also associated with firms that have given money to the Conservatives.

Bob Horton, Railtrack chairman, is among the new industrial knights. Herman Ouseley, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, also becomes a knight, a relatively rare honour among Afro-Caribbean Britons.

The usual crop of honours for serving politicians saw knights go to three Tory MPs — bringing the total since 1978 to 123, or one every six weeks, according to Labour's Denis MacShane — Nicholas Baker, Cyril Townsend and Ray Whitney, all loyalists.

The eight new privy counsellors — Rt Hon to the trade — include middle-ranking ministers like David Davis, Eric Forth, Michael Jack, and Ann Widdecombe, the Home Office minister.

Local Mini Cabs FREE PHONE 0800-21-31-44 (We pay for your call) CARS BIKES VANS OR insure with Eagle Star and get a free courtesy car after an accident. Interested? Call 0800 333 800

مكتبة من الامم

Children said to play among mustard gas canisters



Unexploded bombs, mostly from the first world war, sit rusting at the dump near Vimy. A smaller arms dump at Crotoy blew up two weeks ago

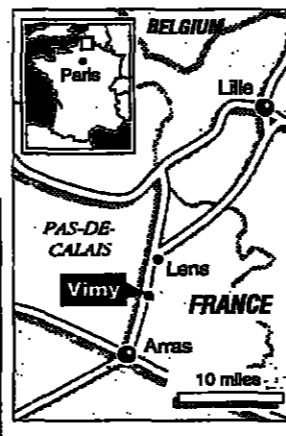
Blast fear at French arms dump



Security is lax, and souvenir hunters can break in

Paul Webster in Paris reports on the row over the safety of a store of rusting, unexploded first world war ammunition

A HUGE unguarded open-air ammunition dump on the first world war battlefield around Vimy in France is at the centre of a row between military and local government officials after reports that the weapons are in danger of exploding. More than 500 tonnes of unexploded British, French and German bombs and shells, including dozens of mustard gas containers, are stocked in a 1,000 sq ft site protected by a wire fence and a padlocked gate. But concern over safety has increased after a much smaller weapons dump at Crotoy in the Somme blew up a fortnight ago. No one was hurt but 200 houses had to be evacuated. The Vimy dump, established nearly 50 years ago among fields in the Pas-de-Calais, contains the biggest collection of first world war ammunition in the country, all of it recovered from battlefields in the north. Occasionally, second world war bombs are also brought in. Chemical weapons make up around a third of the ammunition. The depot was intended as a temporary holding area for the ammunition before it was taken to the Baie de Somme to be blown up under water by the army. But recently environmental organisations have opposed the method because they say it threatens one of Europe's most important bird sanctuaries. Hundreds of shells and bombs, some weighing nearly a tonne, are stacked with military neatness, but hand grenades are kept in buckets. Because of the delay in destruction, many weapons are rusty, and gas has been seen leaking from containers. The mayor of Vimy, Lionel Lancry, said that despite concern that children use the dump as a playground and that souvenir hunters often break in, the army refuses to place a guard. The only warning of potential risk is a small wooden sign saying "danger de mort". The Pas-de-Calais local government authority in the north. Occasionally, second world war bombs are also brought in. Chemical weapons make up around a third of the ammunition. The depot was intended



gendarmerie said that, apart from occasional patrols, it could not keep a watch on the depot.

Colonel Philippe Méchin, who heads the army's bomb squad, said the ammunition was safer at Vimy than on the roadsides or in the fields and villages from where it was recovered after years underground or in unmarked dumps. "There shouldn't be such a stock at Vimy but environmentalists and local councillors are increasingly opposed to controlled explosions," he said, adding that the army had been considering for some time a plan to set up a guarded site inside a military camp. "As Vimy is supposed to be closed down one of these days, nobody is interested in spending money on temporary protection measures."

Experts say war pension rules unfair

Andrew Mitchell, junior social security minister, has said in a letter to Vernon Coaker, his prospective Labour opponent in his Gedling constituency, that Dr Braidwood's findings "reflect the views of experts at the Medical Research Council Institute of Hearing". The Nottingham-based institute, which also has centres in Glasgow and Southampton, is the leading authority on deafness research. Ross Coles, its spokesman, said he and his colleagues had not been formally consulted and did not endorse the conclusions Dr Braidwood had drawn. "We cannot find anyone who discussed it with them, as they claim, and our view is that while Dr Braidwood got most of her facts right, she has interpreted them wrongly," Dr Coles said. He added that it was grossly unfair to apply a "low fence" — the 20 per cent hearing loss threshold — and then make no allowance for further loss of hearing through ageing. "The combine effect, he argued, was to rule out almost all claims for deafness pensions, as probably fewer than 1 per cent would pass the threshold. "It has virtually ended compensation for military deafness," Dr Coles said. "I have seen quite a few Northern Ireland victims and few would come up to the level required; as regards the ordinary military, virtually none. "If you look at data from the Falklands, nobody would get compensation for noise injury on the basis of the new rules." According to confidential DSS documents, about 10,000 war veterans a year will lose claims they would have won previously. A DSS spokeswoman said Dr Braidwood had consulted the hearing institute through its Glasgow centre. The new rules had been backdated to March 1 because that was when the medical consensus had become clear.

Researchers say changes will rule out almost all claims for deafness pensions

Under the new deafness rules, ex-service personnel will be ineligible for life for a war pension for hearing loss unless there was evidence of the damage before they left the armed forces. They will also be ineligible for any pension increase as hearing deteriorates in later life. A previous change, in 1993, barred payment of any pension in cases of hearing loss of less than 20 per cent. The Government claims it was obliged to bring in the new rules because medical opinion had become clear that hearing loss could not be attributed to exposure to gunfire or explosions once the individual had left the forces. The change is said to have been based on a paper summarising medical research and opinion, prepared by Elizabeth Braidwood, a DSS medical adviser. Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish, social security minister responsible for war pensions, says he was told there were no medical experts with a dissenting view.

Blair savages 'weak' Major

Labour leader promises to bring down Government in New Year

Michael White Political Editor TONY BLAIR last night laid claim to the mantle of national leadership when he accused John Major of being too weak to manage his party, let alone the country, and promised to bring down the Government "in any way we can" in the New Year. Next year would be "the year the Government finally has to face the people's verdict. Britain needs a general election as soon as possible to restore firm and coherent government", the Labour leader said. As he spoke, Tory strategists put the finishing touches on their own New Year advertising campaign — "the most negative campaign so far" party sources have said — to be launched next week with the intention of undermining the steadfast qualities Mr Blair claims for his own leadership. The Tory chairman, Brian Mawhinney, last night offered a forecast of hand-to-hand fighting ahead as the Government struggles to stave off a vote of no confidence now that its Commons majority has disappeared. He predicted Labour would campaign on "Five Lies — five completely invented charges about what the Conservative Party will do after we are re-elected". In contrast to the Prime Minister's soothing seasonal message to supporters, Mr Blair painted a picture of a country falling behind its rivals in skills, public services and national wealth, burdened with higher taxes, escalating crime and a costly "BSE fiasco" which demonstrated the collapse of Conservative influence in Europe. Accusing Mr Major of feebly allowing divisions within

the Tory party to "grow and fester", Mr Blair contrasted that with his own record since 1994 as the man who had created New Labour by changing the party's constitution, doubling its membership and modernising its policy objectives. "Voters would know that a strong country cannot be built on weak leadership. They know that a leadership so weak that it cannot run a party cannot be trusted to run the country," he declared before restating New Labour's goals: economic partnership, educational opportunity, decentralised power, a reformed welfare state and an effective EU role. But Mr Mawhinney's tactic last night did surprise Labour election planners. In a tough statement, billed as his own New Year message to staff at party HQ, he specified which "five lies" he expects to be hit by in Labour attacks next month. "They are: that the Tories will impose charges for visiting a GP; that VAT will be placed on food and children's clothing; that pensioners will no longer have the basic state pension upgraded in line with inflation; that water metering will become compulsory; and that there will be "more guns and knives on the streets". All have been denied by ministers, though touted by assorted policymakers. Mr Mawhinney's eye-emptive tactic evoked memories of the celebrated "Ten Labour Lies" campaign launched by Conservative Central Office and the Daily Mail in 1978, among them the claim that a Thatcher government would double VAT — also much denied at the time. In the event it rose from a basic 8 per cent to 15 per cent in Lord Howe's first budget, slightly less than double, but enough to allow the ex-chancellor to call the denial more than "a semantic quibble" in his memoirs. Last night Labour officials denied any such intention, but thanked Mr Mawhinney for publicising such plausible options. "Thanks for writing the script, we'll take it over from here," one said.

Clear your debts and make a fresh start with our new lower rates. 11.9% APR For loans of £10,000+. 13.9% APR For loans of £3,000 - £9,900. Before you know it, credit and bills can add up... leaving you to pay out more than you planned each month. But now you can 'wipe the slate clean' and make a fresh start with a Homeowner Loan from Lloyds Bowmaker. Because the loan is secured by a mortgage on your property, you can also choose to spread the repayments over a longer period (up to 15 years) to leave you with just one simple, more manageable payment each month. So why not check the table to see just how little you could be paying? ALL THE REASSURANCE YOU NEED. As we are a subsidiary of Lloyds Bank, you can rest assured that you're in dependable and responsible hands. We will never encourage you to borrow more than you can comfortably afford. After all, we're here to help you keep more money in your pocket! For your extra peace of mind, optional Payment Protection Plan. IT'S SO EASY TO APPLY. Applying for a Lloyds Bowmaker Homeowner Loan is simple - and you don't have to be a Lloyds Bank customer! To make a fresh start, call us FREE 9am - 9pm Monday to Friday, 10am - 5pm Saturday on 0800 378151. We can give you an immediate decision in principle there and then. Alternatively, return the coupon for more information. A written quotation is always available on request. Remember, you are under no obligation at all, and there are no interviews or arrangement fees. CALL FREE ON 0800 378151 9AM - 9PM MONDAY TO FRIDAY, 10AM - 5PM SATURDAY. YES I own my own home. Please tell me how a Lloyds Bowmaker Homeowner Loan could help reduce my monthly outgoings and leave more money in my pocket. My current commitments are up to date. Post this today to Lloyds Bowmaker Limited (DL), Waverley House, FREEPOST, Bournemouth, BH8 8SR. You don't need a stamp. Or fax this coupon to us on 01202 296337. Name: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Ms/Ms Address: Postcode: Tel. Day (STD code) Tel. Evening (STD code) The information you provide may be used and disclosed to our marketing agencies for reasons of general credit information but credit decisions for individual applications are based on individual circumstances and are subject to credit checks. We will never disclose your details to any third party without your consent. We will never pass your details to any other lender. If you apply to us, you will be dealt with by our staff. Lloyds Bowmaker

The voltage drops. Lights dim. Suddenly electric fires are not as hot as they should be. Ten minutes later there is no alternative. Blackouts are ordered. Electric fires go out, electric blankets and kettles stay cold. And so does the population. GB cover story

Handwritten signature or note at the bottom of the page.



# 4 BRITAIN Tories plan to boost opt-outs

John Carvel  
Education Editor

**A** CONSERVATIVE manifesto promise to help parents and teachers set up a new generation of self-governing schools in competition with local education authorities is being considered by the Prime Minister.

"Charter schools" would be given basic state funding according to the number of pupils, but they would be encouraged to top this up with finance from local businesses and voluntary organisations. Ministers think the scheme could provide an opportunity for enterprising teachers and parents in the run-down inner cities, or in villages where educational provision has been withdrawn as population declined.

The first steps towards the new model are being put in place in the Education Bill now before Parliament. It would allow the Funding Agency for Schools — the quango which supervises the self-governing sector — to pay start-up grants to the promoters of grant maintained schools and recoup them from local councils.

Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Sec-

retary, said ministers were looking at how the idea could be developed, but would not elaborate. Eric Forth, her deputy, is understood to have studied a similar scheme during a recent visit to the US where 500 charter schools have been founded since 1991, many in areas which have lacked good schools.

David Blunkett, the shadow education secretary, said the plan resembled the Government's failed initiative to attract business sponsorship for city technology colleges to compete with local authority schools. "This appears to be in complete contradiction of what the Tories have been doing during 18 years of closing inner city and village schools in the name of eliminating surplus places."

"Having failed with previous attempts to divide the education system, they are now desperate to divert attention from their own failure in reducing funding for schools, worsening pupil-teacher ratios and massively increasing class sizes."

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said the proposal for businesses to support schools was "a step back into the 18th century which did not work then and it will not work now."

## Trawler apprentice scheme seeks to pump new blood into life on the ocean wave



James Spark in the wheelhouse of a Whitby trawler yesterday. Below, another apprentice, Clive Hall, gets some tips on knots from his father, William

PHOTOGRAPHS: STEVE FORREST

**B**RITAIN'S first apprenticeship in sea fishing since the vanished heyday of Atlantic trawlers was launched yesterday, as snow flurries drifted across a heavy swell at Whitby harbour on the North Sea coast, writes Martin Wainwright.

Eight teenagers began a three-year training course leading to a skipper's certificate in a project designed to counter the prevailing image of fishing as a dying trade.

"I hope to be the youngest skipper in the country," said 16-year-old James Spark, one of the successful applicants to the scheme, launched by Whitby trawlers and the Yorkshire and Humber Ports training association. The course is part-funded by North Yorkshire train-

ing and enterprise council, but the port's fleet has also invested directly.

"Our business alone has invested £1 million in boats this year, but the industry has such a negative image at the moment that we could not get new recruits," said Arnold Looker, who runs seven trawlers out of Whitby. "Captains of fishing vessels have a very different job from even 10 years ago — it's all computers and satellite navigation systems and we need really qualified people to run the boats."

James's mother, Judith Spark, said: "He got nine GCSEs, so he could have gone on to college. But he hates being shut in. He's really stuck on it — even getting his knuckles dislocated on a trial run at sea hasn't put him off at all."



## Savings rates UP AGAIN at Nationwide.

FROM 1ST JANUARY 1997

### NEW RATES FOR PERSONAL INVESTORS

CashBuilder		FlexiAccount	
Gross p.a.	Net p.a.	Gross p.a.	Net p.a.
£1-£499	1.00%	0.80%	
£500-£4,999	3.00%	1.00%	0.80%
£5,000-£9,999	3.50%	2.64%	1.50%
£10,000-£24,999	3.75%	2.80%	1.60%
£25,000-£49,999	4.10%	3.20%	2.00%
£50,000+	4.40%	3.52%	2.40%
CapitalBuilder		Special Renewal Bond	
Gross p.a.	Net p.a.	Gross p.a.	Net p.a.
£1,000-£4,999	4.00%	4.90%	3.92%
£5,000-£9,999	4.30%	5.15%	4.12%
£10,000-£24,999	4.50%	5.40%	4.32%
£25,000-£49,999	4.80%	5.80%	4.64%
£50,000+	5.10%	6.20%	4.96%
Monthly Income		InvestDirect	
Gross p.a.	Net p.a.	Gross p.a.	Net p.a.
£1,000-£4,999	3.60%	2.88%	4.00%
£5,000-£9,999	4.00%	3.20%	4.20%
£10,000-£24,999	4.20%	3.36%	4.40%
£25,000-£49,999	4.40%	3.52%	4.60%
£50,000+	4.80%	3.84%	4.80%
TESSA		Bonus 40	
Gross p.a.	Net p.a.	Gross p.a.	Net p.a.
£75-£9,000	6.50%	5.20%	
TESSA 2		Annual	
Gross p.a.	Net p.a.	Gross p.a.	Net p.a.
£25-£9,000	6.50%	5.20%	
Bonus Saver*		Monthly	
Gross p.a.	Net p.a.	Gross p.a.	Net p.a.
£1+	4.50%	3.60%	
The Smart Account		Smart 2 Save	
Gross p.a.	Net p.a.	Gross p.a.	Net p.a.
£1+	4.50%	3.60%	

### NEW RATES FOR BUSINESS INVESTORS

Business Investor		Treasury Account	
Gross p.a.	Net p.a.	Gross p.a.	Net p.a.
£2,000-£4,999	3.00%	2.40%	
£5,000-£9,999	3.40%	2.72%	
£10,000-£24,999	3.80%	3.04%	
£25,000-£49,999	4.20%	3.36%	
£50,000+	4.50%	3.60%	

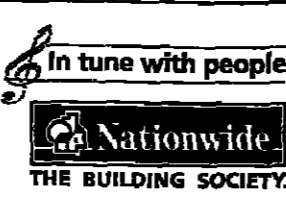
† If the account balance on Business Investor falls below £2,000 interest will be paid at 0.50% gross p.a. (0.40% net p.a.) interest is calculated daily and paid quarterly on the last day of March, June, September and December for Business Investor and Treasury Account. Interest is paid half-yearly on Treasury Account on the last day of June and December. Treasury Account is only available to private individuals.

### NEW RATES FOR ACCOUNTS NO LONGER AVAILABLE

Account Name	Balance	Gross p.a.	Net p.a.	Account Name	Balance	Gross p.a.	Net p.a.
***Amex Reserve	£2,000-£4,999	3.00%	2.40%	BoomsBuilder	£1-£499	1.00%	0.80%
	£5,000-£9,999	3.40%	2.72%		£500-£4,999	3.00%	2.40%
	£10,000-£24,999	3.80%	3.04%		£5,000-£9,999	3.50%	2.64%
	£25,000-£49,999	4.20%	3.36%		£10,000-£24,999	3.75%	2.80%
	£50,000+	4.50%	3.60%		£25,000+	4.10%	3.20%
***TESSA Bond & Linked Bond	£3,000-£9,000	6.50%	5.20%	IncomeBond	£2,000-£9,999	4.10%	3.28%
					£10,000+	5.10%	4.08%
TESSA Monthly Income Bond	£5,000-£9,000	6.10%	4.88%	***Free Option Instant	£1-£499	1.00%	0.80%
TESSA Flexible Savings	£25-£9,000	6.50%	5.20%		£500-£4,999	3.00%	2.40%
CapitalBooms 180	£500-£4,999	4.30%	3.36%		£5,000-£9,999	3.50%	2.64%
	£5,000-£9,999	4.50%	3.48%		£10,000-£24,999	3.75%	2.80%
	£10,000-£24,999	5.15%	4.12%		£25,000+	4.10%	3.28%
	£25,000+	5.55%	4.28%	***Free Option 90 Day	£500-£4,999	4.00%	3.20%
CapitalBooms 90	£500-£4,999	4.00%	3.20%		£5,000-£9,999	4.30%	3.44%
	£5,000-£9,999	4.20%	3.32%		£10,000-£24,999	4.50%	3.60%
	£10,000-£24,999	4.30%	3.40%		£25,000+	4.70%	3.76%
	£25,000+	4.80%	3.84%	***Free Option 180 Day	£500-£4,999	4.20%	3.28%
CapitalBooms 30	£500-£4,999	3.40%	2.60%		£5,000-£9,999	4.50%	3.56%
Monthly/Half-Termly	£5,000-£9,999	4.00%	3.20%		£10,000-£24,999	5.15%	4.12%
	£10,000-£24,999	4.20%	3.36%		£25,000+	5.55%	4.28%
	£25,000+	4.50%	3.60%	Double Bond	£500	3.00%	2.40%
				Bonus 90	£200-£9,999	4.00%	3.20%
					£10,000-£24,999	4.50%	3.60%
					£25,000+	4.80%	3.84%
				Subscription Share	£1-£200 per month	6.50%	5.20%

\*\* If the account balance on Amex Reserve falls below £2,000 interest will be paid at 0.50% gross p.a. (0.40% net p.a.) interest is calculated daily and paid quarterly on the last day of March, June, September and December for Amex Reserve.

\* Any investment in TESSA Bond that was made before 1st July 1996 will be placed in a Linked Bond which will earn interest at the same rate as TESSA Bond, but at a rate of 5.50% unless in 1997 has been replaced.



## Millennium plea by Bottomley

Gary Younge

**T**HE National Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, yesterday invited Britons to contribute their own ideas for celebrating the millennium.

Mrs Bottomley, chairman of the Millennium Commission, called on businesses and civic organisations to come together in an attempt to ensure that the festival empowers communities and reflects the country's religious, ethnic and cultural diversity.

It's 36 months to go," said Mrs Bottomley, at the launch of a consultation document for the Millennium Festival.

"Many of the headlines have been focused on the exhibition at Greenwich, but the whole nation will be involved in this event. We want it to be based on people's own ideas, and we want to reflect the religious, cultural and ethnic diversity of the country," she said.

A budget of £20 million is being made available for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and nine English regions to celebrate the year 2000. The clock is now ticking —

cash is in addition to £120 million pledged to the Millennium Exhibition in Greenwich, south-east London.

"We are sending out a challenge to a wide range of organisations, from charities to businesses, to work in partnership to produce a high quality programme of activity to reach the widest possible audience," Mrs Bottomley added.

The activities which the commission might encourage include those "which the public will enjoy and feel are worthwhile; will bring communities together, while reflecting religious, ethnic and cultural diversities; are both educational and entertaining, and engage as many people as possible in actively celebrating the millennium".

A spokeswoman for the Millennium Commission said: "It was always part of the plan that the events should be as inclusive as possible. Now we are getting the ball rolling with a request for initial ideas from church groups, local authorities, community centres and individuals."

Ideas should be submitted to the commission by February 21.

## Del Boy gathers in the TV millions

Andrew Cull  
Media Correspondent

**D**EL BOY and Rodney Trotter headed into the sunset at the end of Only Fools and Horses and clocked up the year's highest television audience.

The hour-long BBC1 Sunday night special — one of three new episodes shown over Christmas — was watched by 21.5 million according to unofficial figures.

In the last half-hour the audience peaked at 22.1 million, more than 71 per cent of all viewers, and the end of the show brought the National Grid's biggest power surge of the year — 1,600 megawatts — as millions put the kettle on.

The Christmas Day edition was watched by 18.7 million and the second instalment on Friday attracted 18.45 million.

The previous highest audience in Only Fools and Horses' 15-year history were 20.1 million for Christmas Day episodes in 1989 and 1992.

Writer John Sullivan and stars David Jason and Nicholas Lyndhurst were persuaded last year by the BBC to make the swansong three-part.

It ended with Del Boy fulfilling his lifetime's ambition of becoming a millionaire after finding a £5 million watch in his garage.

A BBC spokeswoman said: "We are delighted it proved a triple treat with our viewers. The whole team have left an indelible mark on the history of TV comedy."

The official viewing figures, to be released next week, will include video-recordings and could further boost the show's audience.

BBC1 beat ITV in audience share each day from Christmas Eve until December 25, according to early estimates.

On Christmas Day it achieved a 68 per cent share, compared to ITV's 28.7 and won a 42.2 to 30.5 per cent victory on Boxing Day. One Foot in the Grave, the most popular non-soap over Christmas 1996, was watched by 16.3 million.

30.5 per cent victory on Boxing Day. One Foot in the Grave, the most popular non-soap over Christmas 1996, was watched by 16.3 million.

## NOTICE TO HALIFAX BORROWERS.

The variable base rate for Halifax Building Society mortgage accounts (but not secured personal loan accounts) will be increased by 0.26% p.a. to 7.25% p.a.

The new interest rate will take effect on:

- 1st January 1997 for borrowers subject to immediate notice of increase in the interest rate.
- 1st February 1997 for borrowers subject to one month's notice of increase in the interest rate.
- the dates we specify for other borrowers.

Under the terms of Budget Plan the monthly payment will be amended from April 1997 or from the next review date for mortgage accounts on Annual Review.

21 TRINITY ROAD  
HALIFAX

ملكو من الامال

Shadow home secretary assesses the damage resulting from 'reactionary voting' and pulls a few skeletons out of noble cupboards

# Straw lays into hereditary peers

Michael White  
Political Editor

## Two lords attending — sometimes

**J**OHN Major's vision of the classless society is underpinned by a hard core of Eton-and-Oxbridge hereditary peers whose crucial votes in the House of Lords stem from ancestors who bribed, stole, slept and betrayed their way into royal favour. Labour's Jack Straw declared yesterday.

In a fresh assault upon the hereditary aristocracy, which could — in theory — be abolished by next New Year's Day, the shadow home secretary accused backwoods peers, who rarely attend the upper house, of helping to save the Government from defeat in 66 of the 96 Lords divisions which it won in 1995/96. Ten votes were lost.

Walter Francis John Montague Douglas Scott, 9th Duke of Buccleuch (right), born 1923. Educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. Owner of £400 million worth of property and land in Scotland. First title dating from 1618 when ancestor, Sir Walter Scott, "organised a campaign of terror against the English borders". Dukedom awarded in 1663. Farmer and philanthropist, voted once last year, with the Government.



George Miles Hobart-Hampden, 10th Earl of Buckinghamshire, born 1944. Educated at Clifton College and Exeter University. Descended from Sir Henry Hobart, Baronet (created 1611), aide to William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. Killed in a duel. Eldest son raised to peerage, 10th earl, a City businessman, voted twice in 1995/96, both times with the Government.

But in addition to detailing occasions when the votes of some 320 hereditary peers who take the Tory whip made the vital difference, Mr Straw

also got personal. Stung by the recent claim by Lord Cranborne, leader of the Lords, that amateur peers are increasingly more represen-

tative of the "common man" than professional politicians, he revealed that 226 of the 490 known Tory peers (some do not take the whip) went to

Eton. Some 163 went to Oxford or Cambridge, he said, and 23 more went to the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester. Only three are women.

The latest assault comes as hereditary peers brace themselves for a Labour election victory, and, sooner or later, a short bill to end their voting rights. Only this week a six-point defence plan was offered by the rightwing columnist Simon Heffer, including tightening up on attendance, extra hereditary peers in the Cabinet, and the demand that a Blair government submit its limited Lords reform package to a referendum.

Also in the Heffer plan, published by the Centre for Policy Studies, is a "generous offer" of extra life peers to Labour before the election and a demand that Tory ministers like John Major, who defend the hereditary Lords, have the guts to create a few more of them — only two have been created since 1970.

As the Tory chairman, Brian Mawhinney, moved in

to denounce the shadow home secretary for touching "new depths of negative campaigning with his highly personal, libel attacks", Mr Straw went further. He singled out a clutch of peers with ancestral circumstances worthy of tabloid investigation.

First to be arraigned were the Hamilton ancestors of the 5th Duke of Abercorn (who voted three times last year), accused of "gaining their first Scottish peerage after Sir James Hamilton joined, then betrayed, the Douglas revolt of 1455 against the Crown".

As for the Duke of Buccleuch, who voted once in 1995/96 for the Government, the wealth of Britain's largest private landowner stems from 16th century border raids against the English, fortified with a dukedom on the day one of the family "married the bastard son of

Charles II" in 1663. Lord Vestey's family rise was also controversial. Mr Straw says the first baron was "reviled as little better than a traitor" after he refused to pay taxes in World War I and then paid £20,000 for his title in 1922.

Behind this and other CVs produced by Mr Straw is a determination to show that backwoodsman are "not just political satires", but helped to save Mrs Thatcher's poll tax bill and other reactionary legislation.

It is a hypersensitive charge for Lord Cranborne's supporters who claim the peers routinely amend bad legislation without favour to either side. Yet the widely condemned abolition of social security benefits for asylum seekers was carried on July 22 by 182 votes to 168 only because of the votes of hereditary peers.



Paramedics working in the first aid post at Cream nightclub in Liverpool, where patrons are taken for treatment for injuries or signs of distress. PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER THOMOND

## Club confronts drug abuse with first aid services

Nick Varley visits Cream, in Liverpool, which is helping patrons face up to their problems

**T**ENS of thousands of clubbers will tonight see in 1997 one of the biggest party nights of the year. None will be safer than those at Cream in Liverpool.

The "superclub" has expanded its services beyond playing records and producing albums, into health care, becoming the first venue in England to open a first aid room to improve safety.

Paramedics deal with clubbers suffering from

everything from gashed fingers to the effects of excess drinking and occasional drug misuse. Another patrol the dance floors in tandem with stewards, and refers any of the 1,800 customers looking the worse for wear to the first aid room.

Club general manager Clare Lambe said: "It is a condition that if they want to stay in the club they have to have a check-up."

The medical initiative comes from a determina-

tion to confront the health problems which can arise from clubbing.

"It's not a question of patching them up and pushing them back into the fray," Ms Lambe said. "It's far more long term than that. If someone needs to wake up and face what they are doing to themselves, we try to encourage them."

"If someone has a problem we are not going to throw them out, pretend they are nothing to do with us and hope someone else will deal with them, which does happen."

The policy means the club is admitting that clubbers do take drugs, but the

police and health authorities have welcomed such openness and efforts to address reality.

"There are leaflets in the club about the consequences of drug use, and one of the first aid room's main roles is counselling."

Jeff Young, head of the four-strong team on duty tonight, said: "We are quite happy to talk to them in a non-judgmental way about the effects of the substances they might have taken. The fact we do not condemn them means they are prepared to listen to what we have to say."

But drugs-related work is only a tiny fraction — 5 per

cent or so, says Mr Young — of the first aid room's caseload. Most patients are suffering cuts from trying to pick glass from their shoes, the effects of alcohol or medical conditions such as asthma.

For Ms Lambe, an ex-nurse, the initiative is all about the club scene becoming more responsible. "An ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure. This is realistic and responsible. We are living in the real world."

Mr Young, a veteran of similar medical measures taken in Scotland after a spate of deaths in clubs, added: "Football clubs have

to provide first aid facilities at matches as do other leisure facilities. I think the time has come for club owners to be consulted — like they have at Cream — and say they care about what happens to their customers."

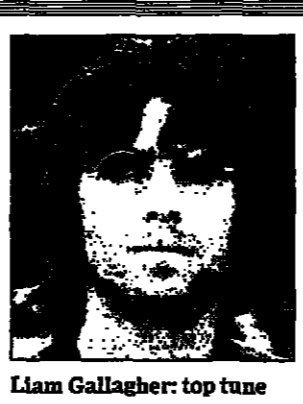
"The last thing I, and many others, want to see is places closed because the Government doesn't think they are safe and then the whole scene being driven underground again."

## Oasis prove they are no mere mirage in Radio One listeners' poll

**A**ND after all... it's Wonderwall. Oasis's anthem has been voted best tune of all time by Radio One listeners.

The poll confirms the Manchester band's dominance of the pop world — they had six other entries in the top 100, with Live Forever at number four and Champagne Supernova, which has never even been released as a single, at eight.

- 1996**
- 1 Oasis: Wonderwall
  - 2 Nirvana: Smells Like Teen Spirit
  - 3 Prodigy: Firestarter
  - 4 Oasis: Forever
  - 5 Underworld: Born Slippy
  - 6 Pulp: Common People
  - 7 Queen: Bohemian Rhapsody
  - 8 Oasis: Champagne Supernova
  - 9 Take That: Back For Good
  - 10 Spice Girls: Wannabe



Liam Gallagher: top tune

- 1992**
- 1 Queen: Bohemian Rhapsody
  - 2 Led Zeppelin: Stairway to Heaven
  - 3 Bryan Adams: Everything I Do
  - 4 John Lennon: Imagine
  - 5 Gerry Rafferty: Baker Street
  - 6 Derek and the Dominoes: Layla
  - 7 George Michael: Careless Whisper
  - 8 10CC: I'm Not In Love
  - 9 The Beatles: Hey Jude
  - 10 Meatloaf: Bat Out Of Hell

ish artists. Dance music is well represented. Techno band The Prodigy are third with Firestarter and 11th with Breaths, and Underworld are at number five with Born Slippy.

Only 12 songs appear in both polls. They include John Lennon's Imagine at 23 (fourth in 1992) and Bat Out Of Hell by Meatloaf at 90 (10).

Radio 1 listeners were invited to vote by phone. A spokeswoman said 11,000 calls were made. After the controversy involving Radio 1's Personality of the Year, it is not thought that its sister station's poll was similarly sabotaged — although new Tory recruits the Spice Girls are at 10 and M People's Search For The Hero, Paddy Ashdown's preferred theme at this year's Liberal Democrat conference, is in at 96.

## Man who jumped on altar in cathedral rampage is found unfit to plead

**W**ORSHIPERS and staff at Westminster Cathedral yesterday told magistrates how they struggled to control a man who went on the rampage during an early morning mass.

Noel O'Connor, unemployed, kept on to the altar at the Roman Catholic cathedral, knocking a six crucifix and candlesticks to the ground and causing damage put at £5,000, Horseferry Road magistrates were told.

As the 29-year-old tried to escape, he punched a worshipper and an elderly volunteer warden, the court heard. Father Charles McMahon,

who was attending the 8am mass on December 17, saw the man as he entered the cathedral. "As soon as I saw him I felt something was wrong," he said.

"He climbed up the stairs, over the rope, and to my amazement he leapt on to the altar. The crucifix and candle-

sticks were waved to the floor."

O'Connor, of no fixed address, faces two charges of assault and charges of making threats to kill, criminal damage, affray and possessing an offensive weapon.

He has been ruled unfit to plead or stand trial and Nazi

Alford, prosecuting, applied for him to be detained at a mental institution.

Stipendiary magistrate Howard Riddle ruled that he accepted the prosecution case and adjourned the hearing until today, when O'Connor will be dealt with in the presence of psychiatric doctors.

## News in brief

### Wife 'burned on funeral pyre'

**A** BUSINESSMAN who killed himself in front of armed police officers probably burned his wife on a funeral pyre, police said yesterday after forensic experts found fragments of human bone on burnt ground at the couple's West Yeo Moor farm at Witheridge, near Taverton, in Devon.

Detectives are trying to establish whether the fragments match those found in the boot of the car in which Derek Levon, 61, shot himself in the head with a shotgun last Friday after he had told police negotiators that his wife, Polly, was in the car.

Detective Chief Inspector Chris Boardman said that a large amount of wood had been used in the fire which would be sufficient "for a funeral pyre". "Whilst our enquiries are steadily coming towards the conclusion that she [Mrs Levon] is no longer alive, we have not come to any final conclusions."

DCI Boardman said that the police were still unsure whether they were dealing with a suicide pact, or a suicide and a murder. The couple had cancelled a trip to see their daughters, Alison and Elaine, in Cyprus on December 21. The daughters are expected to return to Britain shortly.

### Theory before practice

**L**EARNERS will have to pass the theory element of the driving exam before being allowed to sit the practical test under new rules to be introduced tomorrow. Since theory testing was introduced in July, the Driving Standards Agency has allowed learners to choose the order in which they sit the tests as an introductory measure.

Candidates will now have two years in which to sit the practical test after they have passed the theory. Those who have already sat the practical test will have six months to take the theory test. Theory tests for lorry and bus drivers will be introduced tomorrow. — Stuart Miller

### Baby's mother found

**T**HE MOTHER of a baby abandoned in sub-zero temperatures in Whitchurch, Gateshead, has been found by Northumbria police. A spokesman Gordon Chester said: "She is yet to be interviewed to establish the exact circumstances which led to the baby being abandoned."

Last night the baby, named Molly by paramedics, was said to be "progressing well" at Queen Elizabeth hospital. The baby, wrapped only in sheets, was on the verge of hypothermia when she was found by a paperboy, Darren Shmms, 13. Darren's father, Doug, said: "I just hope now that Molly's life gets better from here."

### Praise for baroness

**L**ABOUR'S chief whip in the Lords, Lord Graham, yesterday praised Baroness Birk, a spokeswoman in the Lords with 22 years of unbroken service as government whip, minister and front-bencher, who died on Monday night after a short illness at the age of 77. He described her as "very warm, very political and absolutely devoted to the Labour Party".

Though Baroness Birk recently handed over the post of leading spokesperson on national heritage to Lord Donoughue, she was still the principal spokesperson on broadcasting in the Lords.

Raised to the peerage as Baroness Birk of Regent's Park, she was government whip in the Commons in October 1974 Labour government and then became a junior environment minister. She became Minister of State in the Privy Council office just before the 1979 election. As Alms Birk, she founded the mid-market Nova magazine and also stood unsuccessfully three times for Parliament. Obituary, page 10

## Can Lloyds Bank customers use TSB cash machines?

# Yes.

That's use of an extra 1,890 cash machines free of charge. So now you are even closer to your money.

**THE THOROUGHBREDED BANK.**

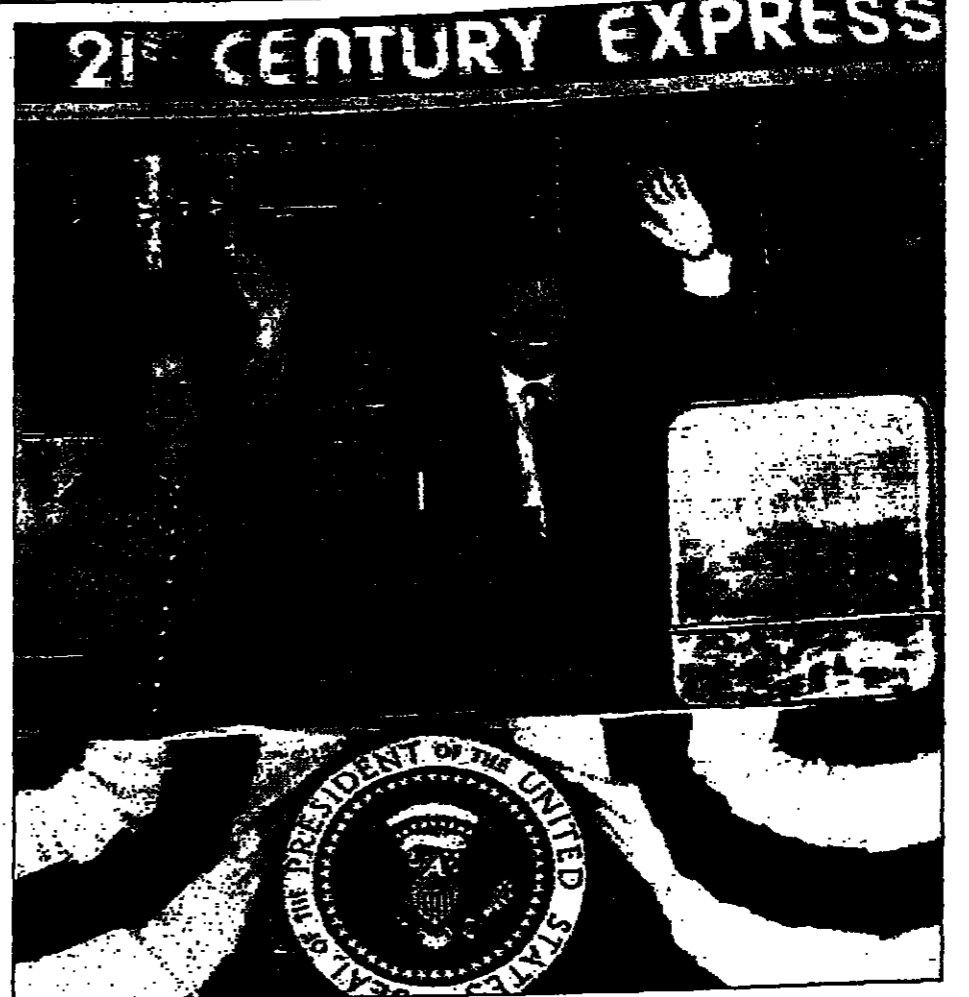
Lloyds Bank Plc, P.O. Box 114, Cannon Street, Cannon Wharf, London EC2A 4JH

1996





On the campaign trail, left, Boris Yeltsin allayed the fears of voters by showing he still had plenty of energy and rhythm but paid the price after his re-election in the summer. Centre, his daughter gave him a hug during a photocall after his recovery from a multiple heart bypass operation. Right, Bill Clinton used the 21st century express to take him across America and keep the media interested in the Democratic convention.



# Great survivors weigh up their debts

## YELTSIN/Russia's leader is in hock to Lebed, his doctors and state workers, writes David Hearst

**B**ORIS YELTSIN wrote himself a lenient end of term report yesterday, claiming credit for ending the war in Chechnya, and promising to do better next year. The president said of the peace deal: "The course for peace often suffers heavy blows. But I will pursue it unwaveringly. This is the course of the president."

scouting in Valdal, 248 miles north-west of Moscow, for a good place to rest, and to have shot "40 ducks and one boar" in Brezhnev's old hunting lodge in Zavidovo just before the visit of the German chancellor, Helmut Kohl. The truth about the gravity his heart condition was revealed only in late September, by the surgeon who was to operate on him, Dr Renat Akhkurin. The president performed badly when it came to fulfilling his election promises, the chief of which was to end the wage arrears to public sector workers within a month of starting his election campaign in February.

graduates to fill up the ranks of the army's depleted officer corps. The army itself will get only one third of the budget it needs to conduct the reforms the president has demanded. An opinion poll published yesterday gave Mr Yeltsin a popularity rating of 14 per cent, half of Gen Lebed's rating of 29 per cent. This appears to confirm the view that Gen Lebed's dismissal only boosted his chances of mounting a real challenge for presidency should the president's health fall again. The acid test of the Kremlin's popularity has been the election of governors in 52 of Russia's 89 regions. Most of the incumbents were men directly appointed by the presidential administration. In the 41 regions where a result has been declared, the Communist-led opposition claims to have secured 23 governorships against 16 for Mr Yeltsin. Alexander Kazakov, the deputy head of presidential administration in charge of the elections, says that only eight of the newly elected governors are "unacceptable" to them. Neither side is coming clean. The Communists supported many candidates who were independent, like Leonid Gorbunov, the director of the port in the Russian Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad. On the other hand, the Kremlin includes in its list of supporters governors like Gen Lebed's brother Alexei, in Khakassia, who could by no means be called a supporter of Mr Yeltsin. The safer conclusion to draw is that the upper house of parliament, the Council of the Federation, where the new governors will take their

## CLINTON/The Comeback Kid owes the Republicans more than he thinks, writes Martin Walker

**B**ILL CLINTON paid a high price for ensuring his presidential re-election this year: his success in raising unprecedented sums for the campaign trail condemns him to a further round of congressional investigations into his dubious donors and associates, and weakens his already scandal-prone administration. But the extraordinary political skill he showed in slowing down, and finally defeating

ing the momentum of what the Republicans had bailed as their revolution after the 1994 congressional elections also suggests his strategy of realigning the Democratic Party into the electable centre of US politics has been successful. President Clinton promised to build "a bridge to the 21st century", but his construction methods recall President Eisenhower's in the 1950s. Eisenhower reconciled his Republican Party to the New Deal, and Mr Clinton believes he has a similar historical role: to reconcile the Democrats to free markets and free trade, and to win their approval for a modernisation of the New Deal system of welfare. Mr Clinton's strategy is that he will bring the Democrats back to the centre of the political spectrum. Indeed, President Clinton's shift from the New Deal to a lesser and heavier model of government was endorsed by both parties in mid-campaign. In the week after the Republican convention in San Diego, he signed into law three bills, each passed with Republican support, which consolidated the new domestic consensus. The first raised the minimum wage from \$4.25 to \$5.15 an hour, a long-standing Democratic objective, and one that few had predicted he would persuade the Republicans to back. The second was the Kennedy-Kassebaum health insurance bill, which, although it was not his initial grand plan of a national health insurance system, does ensure that any worker who changes or loses his job will keep his health insurance. The third was the welfare reform bill, which ended the

60-year principle established under Roosevelt's New Deal that in the last resort the federal government would provide for impoverished mothers and children. Instead, welfare is limited to two years at a time, and to a maximum of five years in any lifetime. It also requires proof of a readiness to work. Its administration was entrusted to the individual states, a significant diminution of federal power. The principle behind the new domestic consensus was to make a sharp, almost Victorian, distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor. The deserving poor were those who worked, or were prepared to work. The glorification of work has always underscored the Clinton project. His earlier legislative achievements included the Family Leave Act, which requires employers to give workers time off to care for a sick dependant, and the Earned Income Tax Credit, which effectively abolished income tax for families on less than average wages: a reform which he claimed benefited 27 million working Americans. Mr Clinton was re-elected in part because he faced a feeble opponent in former Senator Bob Dole, but also because

he returned to the centrist ground on which he was elected in 1992. In 1996, as in 1992, he was tough on crime, resolved "to end welfare as we know it", and promised middle-class tax cuts and a shrunken federal government. He managed to develop a bipartisan foreign policy, despite the daunting political risk of deploying American troops to enforce a US-brokered peace in the Balkans. He was also tough on the United Nations, forcing the secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to retire. And despite sending aircraft carriers after China bullied Taiwan, he agreed with Republicans that US commercial interests in China outweighed human rights concerns. The main legacy of his first term, passed with Republican votes, was the replacement of the bipartisan foreign policy which had put the US at the head of a global military coalition since the end of the second world war with a commercial strategy which made the US the linchpin and guarantor of a free-trading global economy. Immediately after his re-election, Mr Clinton flew to Manila for the annual Asia-Pacific economic summit, at which a new agreement was signed to establish free trade in information technology over the next three years. His economic policy thrived last year as the stock market boomed and the US scored the best economic performance of any of the Group of Seven countries. But his second term may be doomed to an economic slowdown, if not recession, in both the US and Asia, which is watching nervously for China's takeover of Hong Kong. And, ironically, the new scandal of campaign finances which is besetting his presidency stems from the generosity of Asian and American donors who sought to reward his free-trade strategies.

## Strikers bring Israel to a halt

**Jessica Berry in Jerusalem** ISRAEL was at a standstill yesterday on the fourth day of strikes which have brought the country to its knees and left thousands of tourists stranded at the airport over the weekend. More than 250,000 workers abandoned their posts in protest against the budget cuts proposed by the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. Labour leaders say they will lead to widespread redundancies and salary cuts. The government proposes to cut spending by \$2.15 billion (\$1.34 billion) to stop its deficits rising. The current account deficit stands at \$4.62 billion. Industry and government officials said the strikes, which affected most of the public sector — banks, the stock exchange, the telephone company, transport, emergency services, post offices and airports — were costing the economy tens of millions of dollars. Mr Netanyahu lashed out at the Histadrut trade union federation, accusing it of waging a political battle against his unpopular government. He said the strike was "blatantly political, irresponsible and utterly without any grounds for justification". Officials said the strikes were also a protest against Israel's decision to reinstate financial incentives to settlers

## Dozens killed by Indian train bomb

**Suzanne Goldenberg in New Delhi** TRIBAL militants were suspected of detonating twin explosions which struck a crowded passenger train in the Indian state of Assam last night. The blast could be heard four miles away. Indian news agencies quoted officials in Guwahati, the largest town in the extreme north-eastern state, as saying that they feared up to 300 passengers on the Delhi-bound Brahmaputra Mail could have been killed. But the police control room at Kokrajhar, the nearest town to the blast site at Chechamukh, said 18 bodies had been recovered by midnight local time, and 68 injured had been taken to hospital. Although darkness and thick jungle were delaying rescue efforts, police scaled down their estimates of the death toll early today. The Brahmaputra Mail pulled out of the station minutes before the blast, at 7.15pm local time. Police in Kokrajhar said the engine and the first carriage passed safely over the device on the track. The next three cars were devastated. In all, five carriages were derailed. One of the carriages is believed to have been a pantry car, which may account for the lower casualty figures than forecast. "We heard it from our home, which is seven kilometres away," said D. Mazumdar, a sub-inspector at the Kokrajhar police station. "My wife was screaming when she heard." No one claimed responsibility, but the authorities in Assam blamed militants from the Bodo tribe, who have been fighting for a separate state on their ancestral lands, Bodoland. Bodo militants are particularly active in the Kokrajhar district. In May they set fire to more than 100 villages belonging to a different tribe, leaving 125,000 people homeless. The attack on the train follows the blowing up of a bridge on Sunday night, which left the seven north-eastern states cut off from the rest of the country. The last six months have seen an escalation in violence in Assam by the Bodo militants and Assamese guerrilla groups, who are opposed to each other. The two splinter groups were formed when their moderate factions entered into peace agreements and electoral politics. The Bodos claim the Assamese, who settled in the region from the 13th century, usurped their tribal lands.

## News in brief

**Falklands 'shared sovereignty' rejected** PRESIDENT Carlos Menem of Argentina said yesterday that Argentina and Britain should "share" sovereignty of the disputed Falkland Islands. Britain rejected the offer. "The proposal was a result of [diplomatic] strategies changing with time", Mr Menem said in La Rioja, his home province. "I still hope that in the year 2000 we'll see the Argentine flag flying in the islands, either by itself or alongside other flags," Mr Menem said. "If the Argentine flag flies alongside the British flag, that would be a step forward," he added. It was the first time that Mr Menem, who has vowed to regain the islands through diplomatic means by the year 2000, has proposed joint sovereignty. Argentina's claim over the islands is enshrined in the constitution. A Foreign Office spokeswoman rejected the suggestion. "We have no doubt of our sovereignty of the Falkland Islands," she said. "We are not prepared to discuss any change over the Falklands." Almost 1,000 servicemen died in the 1982 Falklands war when British troops retook the South Atlantic archipelago from Argentine invaders. The Argentine foreign minister, Guido Di Tella, said earlier this month that the government must change its strategy towards the islands since there was no solution favourable to Argentina in sight. Relations between the two countries were restored in 1990 when their governments agreed to set aside the issue of sovereignty. Last year the two countries agreed to explore for oil and gas near the Falklands. They are still trying to reach agreement on fishing rights. — AP.

## FBI agent denies spying

Earl Pitts, an FBI agent, denied in Alexandria, Virginia, selling secrets to Moscow for more than \$224,000 (\$140,000). A trial was set for April 21. Arrested on December 18, Mr Pitts, 33 years in the FBI, is the only Russian-born FBI agent charged with spying. The FBI alleges that he took money from the Russians between 1987 and 1992. — AP.

## Hostage impasse

Yemen said it would not use force while negotiations continued to free five Polish tourists held hostage by brigades in the mountainous interior, Poland's ambassador to Yemen said yesterday. — Reuters.

## Crash victims

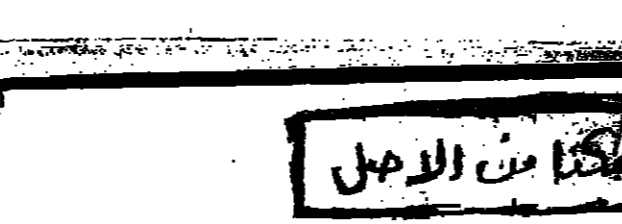
Two commuter trains ran into each other in a valley outside Brescia, Italy, yesterday, killing three people and injuring 18. — AP.

## Trapped in tunnel

Up to 300 people remained trapped by avalanches in a tunnel in the Caucasus mountains yesterday. It will take at least two more days to rescue them, the Russian emergency ministry said. — Reuters.

## Homes takeover

China has taken back 787 overzoned houses occupied by officers of the Beijing military region and punished 17 people in an attempt to root out dishonesty in the military, the People's Liberation Army Daily newspaper said yesterday. — Reuters.



# Hun Sen's largesse hides a bitter split

The co-prime minister's speech to Pol Pot defectors contrasts with his former violent rhetoric **Nick Cumming-Bruce** reports from Phnom Dey, Cambodia

**T**HE KILLING and terror which has dogged Cambodia for much of the past 20 years seemed to be slipping fast into history as the co-prime minister Hun Sen stood up to address the crowd assembled in the old Khmer Rouge stronghold of Phnom Dey.

Prayed before him were 800 former Pol Pot soldiers, their frozen, suspicious stares offset by uniforms which confirmed their defection to the regime in Phnom Penh. Seated behind was Ny Kim, one of the most senior of Pol Pot's commanders to fall into government hands.

But if Hun Sen had come to Phnom Dey to bury one conflict, his presence was partly the product of a bitter new feud, this time with the other co-prime minister, Prince Norodom Ranariddh. The accusations of assassination plots which generals loyal to one leader this week levelled at those supporting the other revealed how far the leaders' rivalry has now split the army.

Khmer Rouge brutality found no place in Hun Sen's speech to "my relatives, my compatriots," in which he praised their courage in defecting.

They had asked for 16 schools, he noted; he would give them 16 schools. They wanted roads; army engineers would build them.

After the speeches, he was off in a convoy of pickup trucks bouncing up dirt roads to the hospital, peering at malaria patients and pressing envelopes with a little useful cash in the hands of each. To the director went a wad of hundred dollar notes.

His relaxed style and winning largesse help explain why Hun Sen is respected even by rivals as one of Cambodia's most effective politicians. But his performance contrasted starkly with the violent rhetoric that only days earlier he fired at Prince Ranariddh and his followers in the royalist party, Funcinpec.

At a time when the government is handing out amnesty to such Khmer Rouge figures as Ieng Sary, once sentenced to death for his part in Pol Pot's genocidal terror, Funcinpec leaders are seeking an amnesty for Prince Norodom Sirivudh.

The half-brother of King Sihanouk was forced into exile early this year to escape alle-

gations of plotting to kill Hun Sen.

Hun Sen's accusation was widely seen as invention, aimed at eliminating a political competitor, and his party now wants him back.

Prince Ranariddh has applied to the King for amnesty and Prince Sirivudh has announced his determination to return.

But Hun Sen apparently will have none of it. Any aircraft carrying the Prince to Cambodia would be shot down, he warned this month.

Friends and enemies judge Hun Sen's resort to threats and intimidation in Prince Sirivudh's case as a calculated preparation for the elections in 1998. Hun Sen and the CPP ruled Cambodia before UN-run elections three years ago and make no secret of their determination to emerge all powerful from the next election.

"These people have been in power since 1979 and will fight tooth and claw for their jobs," a Western analyst said. "Violence will certainly be widespread."

Relations between the two co-prime ministers have already deteriorated to a point where they barely communicate. The council of ministers has met three or four times in the past nine months.

Funcinpec, casting around for political allies, is now moving towards an electoral alliance with smaller political parties and feverishly courted defecting Khmer Rouge commanders with whom the party was once allied in an anti-Vietnamese resistance coalition against the CPP.

Funcinpec's frustration and humiliation at the hands of the CPP have already boiled over into armed confrontation once this month, when royalist troops in Battambang fired B-40 rockets at troops loyal to the CPP. If confrontations erupt, the north-west may once again serve as Funcinpec's fall-back position.

"This is a very dangerous situation," a CPP insider said, adding that both sides were preparing contingency plans for a possible armed showdown.

"Government by the state is over. It's not politicians in control any more, it's the military commanders controlling the troops."

Hun Sen has moved swiftly to try to pre-empt them. Days before arriving in Phnom Dey, he flew to a timber-rich former Khmer Rouge base,

taking businessmen with him to woo the locals.

In a few days' time he will fly to another key defectors' base. Some 90 per cent of Khmer Rouge defectors now support him, he claims.

If that figure seems absurdly high, it is partly because Hun Sen also attracts strong misgivings in his own party. Many do not appreciate his aggressive style and some have sought to mend ties with Funcinpec.

Hun Sen, protected by tanks and a praetorian guard of 600 troops, appears to set his own targets with little regard to his critics. He has toned down his rhetoric against Prince Sirivudh, offering to buy him a first-class ticket and to greet him at the airport.

Few even in his own party seem convinced this is any more than a pause before the next storm.

"It's not yet bloody, it's messy," a Western analyst in Phnom Penh said. "But no one knows what will happen. It could become a bloody mess."



A beach vendor parks his food stall in the sea at Karachi yesterday to catch customers coming back from a swim. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID AHMED

## Returned bodies mark Korea thaw

**John Gittings**

**N**ORTH KOREAN loud-speakers accused the South of "butchery" as the bodies of 24 northern commandos were handed back across the border at Panmunjom yesterday.

An unprecedented apology from Pyongyang on Sunday ended three months of tense argument after the intruders landed on the east coast of South Korea from a disabled mini-submarine. It re-opens the path to economic aid and political dialogue with the US and South Korea.

Yesterday's praise for the dead commandos as "martyrs who fought like heroes" contrasted sharply with the "deep regret" expressed earlier by Pyongyang.

A voice from a loud-speaker claimed that the soldiers — who were shot on South Korean soil — had been "murdered on a regular training mission". But the apology marks a huge climbdown for the North, which must be masked by propaganda.

The whole episode suggests division — or at least confusion — in Pyongyang, where the possible collapse of its "socialist system" has been openly aired.

A recent editorial in the official Nodong Sinmun newspaper says that "difficult and heavy burdens" and that the "future of socialism is now at stake. Recalling the demise of other socialist countries, it asks: "Which will we choose, heroic life or death? What will we become, independent people... or slaves?"

The North Korean statement was brokered by the US state department during talks in New York.

The key provision was a commitment to "ensure

that such an incident will not recur" and "work with others" for peace on the Korean peninsula.

The South Korean president, Kim Young-sam, had demanded a direct apology but settled for a form of words which avoids mentioning his country.

Mr Kim's tough line on the submarine incident led to disagreement with the US, which sought a compromise to restart the Korean peace process.

The North Korean mini-submarine ran aground near Kangnung in September and at least 25 commandos on board fled to shore. All but one were shot dead — 11 apparently in a mass suicide — while the rest were hunted down by the southern army. The survivor who surrendered has not been handed over by the South. A 26th man may have escaped back to the North.

The apology opens the way for North Korea to conclude a huge grain deal with a US company. Pyongyang has admitted that its harvest this year fell short by 1.5 million tons — which would have fed a quarter of its population.

The North has eased its rigid control of agriculture to tackle a second year of floods and famine. Farmers are now allowed to "freely dispose" of 10 per cent of their harvest if they meet the state target.

The apology will also reopen a dialogue aimed at opening talks between the US, China, and the two Koreas.

This is to bypass the North's refusal to negotiate directly with the South on security, and the South's strong objection to bilateral ties between Pyongyang and the US. China welcomed the North Korean statement.

Leader comment, page 5

# FROZEN UNTILL JANUARY 15.

FROM ONLY **£6,995** ON THE ROAD

**THE IRRESISTIBLE CLIO**

FROM ONLY **£9,995** ON THE ROAD

**THE MAGNIFICENT MEGANE**

Why be left out in the cold? Take your pick from the stunning Clio and Megane ranges now — and slip in ahead of the New Year price rise.

CALL 0800 52 51 50 FOR YOUR NEAREST RENAULT DEALER

**RENAULT**  
CARS  
WITH FLAIR

Photos courtesy of lines of going to press.



Measuring the messages

Only Paddy Ashdown strikes a believable note

NORMALLY it is hard to know why political party leaders bother to issue new year messages to the nation. Most years these anodyne and uninspiring pronouncements must be as hard work to write as they are to read. They do little to advance anyone's knowledge or understanding of public affairs. It's a fair bet that nobody remembers a word of them by the end of new year's day.

This time, though, it ought to be different. The year which begins tomorrow brings a general election which has been all too long awaited and which the country patently needs as soon as possible. Public statements by leading politicians therefore ought to matter much more than usual, since they will define the debate — if that's the right word — which will culminate at the polling booths in a few months time.

How do the 1997 new year messages (all of them irritatingly issued in 1996 by the way) measure up to the task and to the needs of the country? Not very well, on any count. John Major's message to the nation asked us to choose between two futures: on the one hand, the uncertain "leap in the dark" with Labour, on the other, the tried and tested "stability and prosperity" of the Conservatives. As chutzpah goes, this takes some beating. No government in recent decades has led the people more recklessly into a leap in the dark than the Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher and Mr Major. The ostentatious and shameless prosperity of the few at the top contrasts with the unmistakable material and moral degradation of many at the bottom. Furthermore, for the Conservatives to promise stability when they have presided over and to a considerable degree encouraged a society based upon unprecedented instability makes one wonder whether words have not lost their meaning completely.

If it is clear that Britain needs change

In 1997, it is by no means clear that it will get the change it needs from the Labour Party. Tony Blair's new year message makes an unanswerable case for the Conservatives to be defeated, but then loses its way when it tries to promise serious and credible alternatives. Mr Blair offers a programme for something which he now dubs "the radical centre" which is heavy on abstractions — new partnership, extended opportunity, modernisation, decentralisation of power, and acting strong in Europe — but weak on effective specifics. It is not surprising that, after two and half years of Mr Blair's leadership, many are beginning to tire of this, and to wonder whether his Labour Party will achieve very much that is worth standing up and cheering for. Labour's position seems to be that all the wrongs of modern Britain — whose existence cannot be disputed — coalesce into a need for strong leadership of the kind which Mr Blair claims to offer. But that's not true. They coalesce into a need for radical measures and themes which will make Britain into a different kind of country. The jury is out on whether that is what Mr Blair really wants any longer.

In this context, the one new year message which strikes a consistently believable note is Paddy Ashdown's. The Liberal Democrat leader doesn't have all the answers either, but at least he speaks words which mean something in sentences which bear some relation to people's experience. He offers policies on education and health unconstrained by the fear of spending more money. Mr Ashdown may not have any chance of being Prime Minister, but his warning against "the least intelligent election ever" rings only too true when one reads the efforts of his rivals — the one unapologetic, the other disturbingly uptight and timid.

The difficulties of detente

Korea is edging forward: but it will be a tricky transition

EDGING forward towards detente on the Korean peninsula is as tricky as walking a few yards in the Demilitarised Zone between the country's two halves. But even with cautious qualification, the apology from North Korea which the USA has brokered does indicate that progress can be made. Pyongyang's reaction to being found out in September when its spy submarine ran aground off the South's eastern coast was extremely truculent. No one could be sure whether it was a routine patrol which went wrong or a sabotage mission with a specific target, and if the latter, whether it had been personally ordered by the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il or by some other faction. The Seoul government had its own reasons for playing up the potential threat, making it hard even for foreign diplomats on the spot to gauge its real significance. The Clinton administration reacted coolly — to the point of upsetting Seoul — but Washington's preference for a compromise solution has paid off.

This is the first time that Pyongyang has ever expressed its "deep regret" for any covert action. Its stated intention to "make efforts to ensure that such an incident will not recur" is just as unprecedented. It is hardly surprising that North Korean propaganda was attempting yesterday to present this climb-down to its own people in the most favourable light, denouncing the South once again with fiery language. These atmospherics should be dis-

counted: the most important task is to press ahead on three fronts, with the resumption of food aid, implementation of the 1994 nuclear agreement, and progress towards a broader North-South dialogue under joint US and Chinese auspices.

The Northern behaviour over recent months conveys more than a hint of inner turmoil. The party elite no longer accepts the Kim Il-sung cult unconditionally, while the general population is alienated by food shortages and the growth of corruption. These are the signs of a political culture in chronic and perhaps dangerous decline. South Korea, though a very different type of society, is also in a state of transition from a past which it shares necessarily with the North. Democratic reforms do not easily address underlying patterns of privilege and authoritarian control. Yesterday the New York Times described President Kim Young-sam's new security law, rushed through a secretly convened session of the National Assembly, as a damaging blow to South Korea's emerging democracy. His new labour legislation, poorly drafted and criticised from all sides, has also been passed without debate and in the face of widespread workers' protests. It is true that the opposition had tried to physically prevent the Assembly from meeting, but secret manoeuvres by the ruling party can only compound the damage to democracy. Yes, Korea is edging forward, but it is a tricky transition all round.

Honours of a sentimental populist

The real test of daring would have been to award gongs to Oasis

IT'S A FAIR bet that there are no knights winking their way back to Buckingham Palace this morning in protest at the honour awarded today to Paul McCartney. Thirty years ago it was very different when he and his fellow Beatles got the MBE "for services to exports". This was denounced by the guardians of conservative Britain as proof of what happens if you get a Labour government and the country is ruled by Harold Wilson.

How things have changed. Today, a Conservative government awards a knighthood to Sir Paul and propels Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber to the House of Lords — an honour which was never given to Elgar. Today, there is no more sentimental populist in power than John Major: his New Year's Honours List groans with names which meant something in Brixton in the 1950s — Joan Collins, Frankie Vaughan, Alec Bedser — but which are a bit forgotten

there today. The real test would have been to award MBEs to Oasis. Today's list shows the honours system at its best and its worst. If there must be honours, then it is right that the people's real heroes should be recognised. But it also contains a reminder — in the standard issue knighthoods to Conservative backbenchers of no special distinction — of what is unacceptable about the system, the expectation that gongs go with the job.

Next time there is an honours' list it may be authorised by a new Prime Minister. Let him commit himself in advance to two basic reforms of the system. First, that honours can only be given to those who pay the bulk of their taxes in this country (that would thin out today's list), and second, that no one elected to the House of Commons can ever be made a member of the House of Lords. That would sort out the political wheat from the chaff.

Those Party Leaders' New Year Messages at a glance!



Letters to the Editor

Speed saves — at 20 mph

YOUR leader (Lower speeds will save lives, December 27) is a timely reminder that we need to do more to reduce death and injuries on our roads. The vast majority of the 45,000 children killed or injured in road accidents each year were walking or cycling on "quiet" residential roads within a quarter mile of home. Reducing speed limits to 20 mph on residential streets and enforcing these limits could dramatically reduce the number of deaths and injuries to children and young people. Carol Sherriff, Director, Child Accident Prevention Trust, 18-20 Farringdon Lane, London EC4R 3AU.

THE Transport Research Laboratory finding that 20 mph zones cut accidents involving children by 67 per cent makes a powerful case for immediate government action. Labour has urged straightforward steps the Government should take to extend the benefits of the lower limit beyond the present 200 zones: make it easier and quicker for local councils to put in 20 mph zones; review the level and cost of traffic-calming measures presently required for approval of 20 mph schemes; pilot speed cameras; link 20 mph zones with Safe Routes to School programme.

Urgent implementation of these initiatives would save lives, reduce the tragic toll of child injuries and make the streets safer for everyone. These must be important goals for the New Year — and for a new government if the present one won't act. Andrew Smith MP, Shadow Transport Secretary, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

If it ain't got that swing

RICHARD Williams's account of the alleged death of jazz (Spontaneous combustion, December 28) is likely to prove premature. He seems to share the common prejudices that arrangement is the enemy of spontaneity. We are invited to mourn over the demise of the all-but-gone totally spontaneous jazz band. The truth is that jazz bands rarely produced music of value. Improvisation is a relative term. Worthwhile improvisation is based on years of practice in the musical vocabulary of jazz. One of the greatest musicians to emerge from New Orleans was Jelly Roll Morton and there can be little doubt about the high degree of arrangement of his music. Would it make sense to regret the high degree of composition and arrangement in the work of the great jazz big bands? Or isn't it the case that it was precisely the quality of that composing, which spawned jazz and provided new opportunities for the improvising musician?

Whatever the merits or demerits of Wynnton Marsalis may be, he is only one part of a very rich contemporary jazz scene. It is perhaps that very richness which makes it less likely that a few individuals come to the aid of individual

musicians, as happened in earlier periods. Jazz is very much alive and can be heard in and around London (and no doubt other UK cities) every night of the week. David Pavett, 14 Grovewood Court, 14 The Grove, Isleworth TW7 4JZ.

RICHARD Williams's piece on the death of jazz is spot on, albeit 25 years late. What he only hints at is that for the last 20 years the adventurousness previously in jazz is now in free improvisation. It is true that this is a minority activity, but this is largely due to its lack of exposure: even the Guardian does not have a critic on board to cover the most important musical developments of the last three decades.

It is wrong to call free improvisation a branch of jazz, even though most of the original experiments came from jazz. Many subsequent free improvisers came from the world of composition, and the advent of "recycled" sound meant that creators no longer had to resort to notation to preserve their music, and from the desert of rock, which was found to be musically dead at birth. Martin Davidson, 3 Bittacy Rise, London NW7 2EEL.

Threads in the ethnic weave

THE Census question identifying ethnic groups (Row over plan for Census race labels, December 9; Letters, December 11, 12) seeks to do two things at once. It achieves neither as well as it might if it addressed them separately.

The ethnic-origin question was introduced to monitor social and economic disadvantages among non-white groups. The Census's primary task, therefore, is to identify people with diverse family origins. This is a question of fact which will not change over an individual's lifetime and which can be handed down from parents to children. The Census needs this information so that members of minority groups can be counted, and their circumstances compared over time.

Second, the Census question is trying to ask what groups people identify with most closely. This is a question of personal opinion. An individual's opinion may change over a lifetime, and differ from that of his or her parents.

It is generally agreed that those less clearly identified in the Census are second- and third-generation descendants of migrants, and people of mixed parentage. If a Census question was unequivocally concerned with family origin, most of the "black other" group would record that their parents and grandparents had come from the Caribbean. Because of growing black-white marriage, it would also be necessary to ask separately about your mother's and your father's family origin. This pair of changes would provide a solid demographic base.

There are also important issues about a sense of community identity or "belonging". The Census may have a role to play in a national recognition of Britain as a multi-cultural society. This is a complex issue affecting white people such as Jews or those of Irish descent, as well as those of black or Asian origin. It may require detailed and sensitive investigation in a special survey before questions can be considered for inclusion in the national Census.

The important point is that the Office for National Statistics should experiment with well-thought-out alternative approaches, as well as narrow variants on the existing question.

Richard Berthoud, Tariq Mehta, Ethnic Equality and Diversity Group, Policy Studies Institute, 100 Park Village East, London NW11 5SR.

Facts of war

VICTORIA Britain (Private view, December 29) uses the term genocide to describe the killings that occurred in Rwanda in 1994. But although the event may appear on paper as a genocide, the motivation was not fuelled by ethnic hatred or nationalism. In international law, genocide is distinguished by the ethnic-hatred motivation. In other African wars, such as the Nigerian, Somali and Eritrean wars, there was no labelled genocide because it would lead to a "malicious disregard of the facts". The motivation behind the Rwandan massacre was based on a struggle for political power between the Hutu and Tutsi government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front. Both fought for survival at the other's expense (not through ethnic passions and hatred) which led to the killings. Chris Mitchell, 17 Cliffe Park, Seaburn, Sunderland SR6 9NS.

Counting the cost, roughly

YOU MAKE an extraordinarily odd calculation of the amount of help provided by the Government under the Rough Sleepers Initiative (Matters Arising, Society Guardian, 18 December), suggesting that the number amounted to £250,000 per head. The initiative began in 1980 when more than 1,000 people were estimated to be sleeping rough in central London on any night. That number is now down to less than 250. Independent research has found that several thousands of people with a history of sleeping rough have been provided with help and long-term accommodation under the initiative during its first six years. The £180 million spent to date has provided support for such people through voluntary sector outreach and resettlement agencies and more than 1,000 hostel places. However, the bulk of the money has gone to housing

associations to provide a stock of more than 3,500 new homes for people who have slept rough.

The initiative is now in its third phase: it has been expanded in London and extended to 12 other areas. By 1998, the Government will have invested over £250 million to help ensure that there is no necessity for people to sleep rough.

While the number of individuals who sleep rough in England on any night can now be measured in hundreds, several thousand people have been helped over a number of years under the initiative since 1980. So if you do your sums again you would arrive at a very different answer, even on the crude basis of your original calculation. David Curry MP, Minister for Housing, Department of the Environment, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB.

No complaints

I WORKED as a NHS hospital administrator from 1960 until the start of reorganisation in 1982. During my career I was responsible for the management of 14 hospitals, including Chase Farm Hospital, Enfield. Written and verbal complaints were sufficiently unusual for the details of individual cases to stick in my memory 20 or 30 years later. Often two or three weeks would pass with no complaints being received. Last year Chase Farm Hospital received 966 complaints. Safe in whose hands? Don Gardiner, The Coppice, Wiford, Warr 5G12 8RT.

A Country Diary

SOMERSET: In Porlock Bay there is an inviting space where flat green fields reach the edge of the Bristol Channel and only a shallow bank of shingle divides land from sea. On a still December day the water was as flat as the fields, sheep and cows were grazing in a scene of absolute peace and it was hard to imagine that the shingle bank performs the necessary office of barrier against high tides and rough weather. The quietness and shallowness of the shore, where small craft can easily be beached, made this a spot formerly favoured by smugglers, but it is also one of those places where there are, from time to time, powerful reminders that the folk who lived in what is now Somerset used once to have to keep a wary eye on sky and sea, ready to gather their cattle swiftly up on to higher ground when the sea began to encroach and turn much of the land into lakes or impassable swamps. The combination of wind and tide that last

month wrecked walls and shopfronts at Minehead also poured water over the shingle bank, flooded fields, and killed dozens of the farmer's sheep. The parish council has, in each of the past two years, made a grant of £1,000 for repairs to the shingle bank, but this latest storm has prompted wider consideration of the protection of the coastline and meanwhile payment is being withheld. A councillor is quoted as not expecting much to be done for some time. He says that the National Trust has engaged the services of a Cambridge professor to study the matter. The pattern that man and geological events have made will provide a rich field for his researches. If he gets beyond the two Quantock heads, and down a lane past the Priory at Kilm, he will come to an eerie expanse of flat jigsaw shapes made by dark shales and bands of limestone. It looks like a landscape by Dalí. JOHN VALLINS

Searching questions, and the turning of the screw

I WAS perturbed to read of the way probation officers are being treated during official visits to prisons in England and Wales (Row over jail "humiliation", December 28). I cannot accept that there is any justification for the intrusive searches which it appears some probation officers have endured. My experience as a social worker visiting Scottish prisons could hardly have been more different. I was never subjected to any form of body search. I was occasionally asked to open my briefcase to display its contents. The only other scrutiny to which I was exposed was a careful check of my identification. While it is tempting to conclude that security at the pris-

ons which I visited was very lax, I prefer to draw the conclusion that I was viewed as a "trusted professional" who would not countenance breaching prison security. There is one other possible explanation, however, and it is that other measures which are taken make it unnecessary to search official visitors. When speaking to a discharged visitor I learned that after I had visited him in prison he had been detained in the interview room and very carefully searched for contraband. I cannot say if the searching of prisoners following such visits was standard, but the fact that such an option is available negates any security argu-

ments for searching official visitors. Angus Baxter, 8 Talsman Rise, Weddidge, Livingston, West Lothian EH54 6PH.

THE IDEA that probation officers might take illicit matter into prisons is laughable. Like all the other so-called "civilians" working in prisons they are too intimidated by uniformed staff to dream of such a thing. On the other hand, as any experienced convict with a bit of money on the outside could tell you, the most reliable courier in such dealings is a well turned "screw". David Pocock, 18 St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1SB.

Handwritten text in Arabic script: "مكتبة الامم المتحدة"



Diary

Matthew Norman

THIS is the time of year when diarists endure the painful duty of selecting the nuggets which will merit a permanent place in our national culture. The stories which, after exhaustive comparative research, we deem to be the true defining episodes of the age. The tales which, er, we go to re-use with no further effects, and so preserve our Diarists' best energies for the new year.

WE begin today with the contenders who came forward in 1996 in the quest to be Britain's drollest public-relations practitioner. We thought we had a winner in May, when British Energy sent us a slickly produced "fact sheet" to launch a sharp effort. We must have been concerned about nuclear clear waste found much to assuage their fears. "In common with other organisations, such as hospitals, which produce radioactive waste, the radioactive discharges by the nuclear industry are strictly regulated," it said. (Reassuring, especially for those in hospital.) But it was this that almost clinched it for British Energy: "The production of producing electricity from nuclear power is broadly similar to other types of power stations, such as coal, oil or gas." We were told, "except in respect of the source of heat." Utterly magnificent.

BUT it was not enough to win. Andrea Marks, from Edgware, Middlesex, came closer, with a release for her publishing client, BookTrack. The headline almost won for its subtle opportunism: "BSE could be good news for vegetarian food writers." There was also strong competition from Yorkshire Water, which sought a "Media Relations Manager". As the advert said, "the successful candidate will acquire some of the best media-relations experience in the UK". He or she will also "need to retain a sense of humour". Yes indeed.

WE had another outstanding entry from Lloyds Bank, which explained why it was sending out questionnaires "to help us maintain our legendary service". Legendary? Ah. The press office had an answer. "The word legendary is used very slowly, as though to be bedeviled." "Is to make customers realise that service is improving all the time." So legendary referred to the future, not the past? "That's correct, yes. Legendary refers to ongoing improvements." Ah.

BUT the search ended with a winner when a medium-sized package, about right for an answering machine, arrived here in mid-July, addressed to our personal-finance editor, Margaret Hughes. It came from pensions firm Scottish Life, and in it was a pigeon. A homing pigeon, in fact. In a "Yours feathery" letter, he introduced himself as Donald, and invited Margaret (one of 77 journalists to receive a pigeon) to a press conference on August 12. Although the box spoke of being "RSPCA-approved", you may remember that the society was furious — a response which had John Allison, Scottish Life's marketing director and the man who approved this brainwave of London PR firm Clarendon, "disappointed and sad". We never heard from Mr Allison after we sent him a gift in the same box (a delicious herring, with the words "The fish" on the box), but to Mr Allison, we offer warmest congratulations. Can you win the double in '97?

SPACE, finally, to tell you about the winner of the Diary's Rapid Rebuttal Prize of 1996. It goes, with absolutely no competition, to Little Oofy Wege-Prosser, for rapidly rebutting the suggestion that Nancy Mandelson, the disco-loving MP for Hartlepool, was among those Tony Blair advisers savaged by Clare Short as "the people who live in the dark". Oofy was quite clear on the matter. "No, it's definitely not Nancy," he rebutted, even before we'd fully buried. Actually, we think we should make this the Rapid Rebuttal Prize of 1997. It's a rare pleasure to rebut before he rebuts.



Beware media rats who will jump ship

Commentary

Hugo Young

WE enter the year of decision, for the people but also for the power that thinks it matters most. There will be no more entertaining sideshow to the British election than the spectacle of the Tory press piling its way out of a dilemma it has done so much to create. Having spent four years ensnaring the government it was instrumental in electing, it must decide whether household gods or absentee proprietors require it to support, as it always has done at elections, the diminished creature, or whether it should deem itself to have no alternative but to back the winning side. The life-span of strategic evasion in this delicate matter is about to expire.

Merriment beckons in many forms. For some columnists and editors, the power of mere logic could work an unexpected effect. Paul Johnson and William Rees-Mogg must be rivals for the world record in columnar amnesia, but even they might find the rage

and ridicule, sometimes the near-hatred, they have evacuated on John Major impossible to square with a last-minute endorsement, for fear of knocking the last prop out from under a credibility that others, more than they themselves, most tenderly investigate.

Whole newspapers, too, have compiled such a well-stocked data-base of venom, instantly available on the Net, that a sudden manifesto of glowing support for Mr Major would be bound to call in question either their first judgment or their second, and therefore, inexorably both.

Connoisseurs, I think, won't count for as much as some cynics have proposed. The notion that Mr Murdoch will instruct the Sun to back the Labour party because most of its readers are now Labour supporters overlooks the thin connection, provable at many elections, between voting and reading habits.

Where, precisely, these embarrassments will lead cannot be predicted. The Telegraph is presumably safe for the old party. The Express seems quite likely to offer the perverse spectacle of Labour's first press tycoon, Lord Hollick, nonetheless falling to deliver. The Mail, the better to exaggerate its power, less likely suggests the possibility of a break with the past. At the Times I seem to hear the throat-clearing of rats making prudent preparation for their destiny. Almost certainly the agonies apparent in the leader columns, whichever way they fall, will be reflected by a dank half-heartedness in the coverage. This will not be an election in which newspapers have either the nerve or the will to run front-page lies against the Labour Party every day of the campaign.

Which is exactly what Labour strategists have been working for. Give us fairness in journalism, they say, and all will be lumpy-dory. They've poured enormous effort into sweetening these historic enemies, and they're about to be rewarded. The courtship has been two-way and, from the party's point of view, has divided if not totally seduced the other side. Journeying from Wapping to Australia, and from Kensington to the Isle of Dogs, Tony Blair has become the acceptable face of the party that

once dared not breathe its name in tycoonish society. Even if the reward is delivered, however, the comic aspect of these writhings isn't all that's to be said about them. They may do their bit, more by omission than act, to help Labour get elected, but they don't deserve the credit that might usually be assigned to an honest conversion. For there has been no conversion. And there's very little honesty.

If Tory journalists do back Labour to win, it won't have much to do with support for the Labour project. In no way will the early Labour years emulate those of Mrs Thatcher, when most editors chose to perform as unctuous auxiliaries in her great struggle for national recovery.

While acquiescing, for their own reasons, in a Labour victory, these papers can be relied on to resume their old attacking mode the moment

the government does something that brings it short-term unpopularity. Having wriggled out of their hatred of Labour by reference to the brilliant qualities of Tony Blair, they won't take long to react to the painful discovery that Mr Blair is obliged to surround himself with a government full of characters they don't like.

Most of these proprietors, editors and writers, moreover, have their own quite other, agenda. They're

pledged not to a new Labour government but a new Conservative party, and the Blair years will be valuable solely to that end. They look to build a party of the further right: welfare-cutting, privatising, minimal statist, and reliably phobic in its attitude to the European Union. What they want, perhaps above all, is a more powerful engine to direct against what has to be a major government priority

constructive membership of the EU. The compliance Labour seems to have secured from sections of the Tory press is, therefore, more than a little treacherous. And it has been purchased at a high price. For what the press likes about Labour is that it appears no longer to be Labour at all. On every front where you can see the leadership softening or blurring, or reaching for the clothes of non-committal, you see Mr Blair's desire to be loved, or at least not feared, by the organs of the enemy.

One of Labour's systemic disadvantages is that, unlike the Tories, it can never secure dotting compliance from its own side. For this reason, it treats the Guardian more like an enemy than a friend.

Bidding for the other side, however, rests on a worse delusion. Which would you prefer: A government that has paid tribute to the enemy, and is never allowed to forget it? Or one that laid out its programme fair and square, Europe not excluded, and got the mandate that enabled it to kick these fickle opportunists in the teeth?

How Whitehall kept poverty off the agenda



David Brindle

BEFORE they close the 1996 file on embarrassing leaks of Whitehall documents, here is one more for the tally. It comes from the Department of Social Security and casts a revealing light on the way civil servants help politicians shut down debate on awkward issues.

This has been the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, declared by the United Nations. Not many people in Britain know that, because the Government has quite deliberately done nothing about it. Poverty, it told the UN, was a matter for the Third World.

The story starts in March 1995 when a UN summit in Copenhagen agreed the anti-poverty theme and a programme of action for 1996. Britain was one of the few countries not represented by a head of state or government, sending instead Baroness Chalker, Minister for Overseas Development. Nonetheless, she signed up to a joint declaration committing Britain to "establish... strategies and affordable time-bound goals and targets for the substantial reduction of overall poverty and the eradication of absolute poverty".

This distinction between two measures of poverty is critical, because it goes to the heart of the argument the Government subsequently sought to deploy to justify its inaction. Ministers resolve to do nothing because clear in the spring, when a coalition of welfare groups inquired how the Government proposed to fulfil the Copenhagen declaration, the Coalition for the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty — including Oxfam, Save the Children and the Low Pay Unit — pointed out that inequality had grown faster in Britain than in any other industrialised country except New Zealand.

Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, replied that the UN recommendations "principally relate to the needs of underdeveloped countries". Britain already had in place "the infrastructure and social-protection systems to prevent poverty and maintain living standards".

The Government toughed it out and the international year has passed here with little notice or impact. Credit (if that is the word) for this must go to the way ministers reacted to criticism when their negative stance became clear. The coalition wrote

back to Lilley, arguing that the summit declaration had been carefully worded to include Britain and to require industrialised countries to take specific, new steps to counter relative as well as absolute poverty. It requested a meeting with the minister to take its case further.

A confidential note sent at that point to Lilley from a senior DSS official, Mark Palmer of the department's Income Support Policy division, has now come to light. Palmer warns Lilley that his previous reply to the coalition had "appeared on the front page of the Guardian and caused some controversy generally". Recommending a speedy further reply to the points raised by the coalition, he says: "These points do not seem to further the debate greatly and there is clearly a significant difference in views between the coalition and the Government. A draft reply is attached, therefore, which takes a bullish line and seeks to close the matter."

The note concludes: "With regard to the request for a meeting, there seems very little to gain... As the request is made somewhat obliquely in the final paragraph of the letter, officials remark that it is ignored entirely in the reply." The letter drafted by Palmer, and sent by Lilley the next day, did indeed ignore the request for a meeting. Settling out the Government's social-security record in what might well be considered bullish terms, and avoiding any use of the word "poverty", it says: "I think we can fairly claim to have raised the public profile of the role of welfare to an extent that the issues are now widely recognised across the political spectrum and beyond our shores."

PALMER'S note includes one additional, fascinating aside. Shortly after the Guardian first reported the Government's refusal to act on the Copenhagen declaration, the newspaper carried a letter from Sir Norman Fowler, former Social Services Secretary, strongly supporting the Government's position. Enclosing a copy of this letter for Lilley's attention, Palmer says: "Sir Norman Fowler wrote to the Guardian (inspired by ministers) refuting the allegations made."

To obviate the need for a Whitehall leak inquiry into the Palmer note, however, the Guardian is on this occasion prepared to name its source. The note was helpfully sent among other documents, supplied by the DSS apparently for briefing purposes, in response to a letter from the Blackpool Church Action on Poverty group. The sender was Nick Harwood, Conservative MP for Blackpool South.

David Brindle is social services correspondent of the Guardian



Should crime-victims' families have a say in sentencing? No, cautions David Edgar — but let them channel their rightful anger into positive action

Vengeance no answer

IF, as still seems eminently possible, an Australian cab driver is asked to decide whether two British nurses are decapitated in Saudi Arabia, then one beneficial side-effect might be to slow the gadabout rush towards victim power in the criminal-justice system here.

Whether or not Lucille McLaughlin and Deborah Parry murdered Yvonne Gilford in the King Fahd Medical Centre in Dhahran, and whether if they did so they deserve to be publicly beheaded for it, the events of the weekend surely demonstrate not only the indignity but the cruelty of giving Miss Gilford's brother Frank — at a time of strain and grief — a responsibility he did not solicit over the lives of two human beings he has never met.

Yet the principle of victim power has become increasingly the stuff of public rhetoric and (prospectively) judicial practice in this country. Four years ago, probation officers began to consult victims about the parole of criminals who had assaulted or robbed them, in order to take their views into account in imposing residential and other conditions on parolees' release. Now, this perfectly sensible concern with the physical protection of former victims has mutated into a much more suspect scheme — being piloted in six police areas and due to report in a year — to enable victims of robbery, sexual assault and burglary to influence sentencing. Thus far, statements by

victims of their experience of the crime are heard in private and may be taken into account by the prosecution service and the courts. But clearly one possible outcome is the institution of open victim's statements in court on the model of the system already operating in many American states. And it's not a far cry from that to the relatives of manslaughter and murder victims also seeking to contribute to sentencing.

As with so much else in current judicial practice, this move has been led by the press. Indeed, victims' statements are merely giving official recognition to what has long been unofficial journalistic procedure. It's hard to remember a time — though

Hindley should be paroled, an ITN news reporter was interviewing the mother of one of the Moors Murders victims about her feelings. As the mother failed to volunteer the life-sentence analogy, the reporter prompted her by asking: "What's it like for you? Are you serving a life sentence yourself?" — with which sentiment, not unnaturally, she agreed. In this climate, it's no surprise that Frank Gilford echoed very much the same rhetorical form last Thursday, when he initially rejected making a clemency call on the grounds that "whoever did this did not give clemency to my sister".

It is not to devalue the grief of the bereaved — in fact, I think, it is to respect it — to insist that to equate the punishment of a criminal with the grief of his victims' relatives is a false analogy. Violent criminality demonstrates a failure of that very empathy with other human beings without which grief cannot be experienced. Punishment is indeed an external acknowledgment of the failure of the criminal to imagine what his victims or their relatives must feel like. Based on a fundamentally false premise, the analogy faces victims' families with a morally unacceptable choice. Indeed, it actually gives them no choice at all: by asking victims to equate their degree of grief

with the criminal's degree of punishment, victims' families are asked to measure their anguish on a completely inappropriate scale: in essence, they are being asked if they love their lost relative enough to see their killers swung for it (or only enough to see them put away). And so, as a consequence of a sloppy journalistic cliché — now perhaps to be enshrined in British law — Frank Gilford is pressured by a question he should not be asked into testing his own feelings against those of the people who battered his sister to death.

None of this is to imply that the relatives of victims do not and should not feel aggression and rage against the killers of their relatives. Indeed, the whole purpose of the system is to acknowledge such proper, understandable and justified rage by removing the responsibility for its redress. In the second presidential debate of the 1988 American national campaign, Democrat Michael Dukakis was asked how he would react if his wife Kitty was raped and murdered. Foolishly, Dukakis refused to engage with the lurid form of the question, and instead turned in a coolly rational outline of the anti-capital-punishment case. What Dukakis should have said was something on the grounds of the following: "Yes, Bob, I agree with the

Advertisement for Rukba charity. It features a silhouette of a woman and a child. Text includes: "I do so appreciate the care and support that Rukba gives me", "Rukba is unique among charities for the elderly. Our financial help assists people to stay in their own homes, and we have an 800 strong home-visiting volunteer force of helpers. They listen to the problems and offer friendship. If you would like more information about our work, complete the coupon below or telephone 0345 58 56 80". At the bottom, it says "Rukba Helping elderly people stay independent".



Peggy Herbison

# A politician of quiet integrity

**P**EGGY Herbison, who has died aged 59, was for 25 years the MP for North Lanark and a quietly heroic minister for pensions from 1964 and 1966, and for social security between 1966 and 1967. And when she resigned in 1967 it was as a quiet loyalist, after many rounds of battles for pensioners and poor families against her hated "overlord" the late Douglas (later Lord) Houghton, and the equally detested Chancellor, James (now Lord) Callaghan.

Lanarkshire miner's bright daughter. Born in Shotts, she attended the local Dykeshead school, then Bellahill Academy and Glasgow University, where she chaired the university's Labour branch and earned her MA. She went on to teach English and history at Allen Glen's in Glasgow. Two of her brothers, one an Olympic boxer, followed her father into the pits.

She entered Parliament in the great wave of 1945, having defeated Sir William Ansell, better education and opposing apartheid. She became a member of Labour's National Executive in 1961. She was only dropped into the mainstream of behind-the-scenes fighting when she became minister for pensions in October 1964 in Harold Wilson's new government. It had a majority of three and a near-empty Treasury. All the election pledges made in opposition came up against the opposition of the Treasury. She was a far-sighted

when she made way for the late John Smith in 1970. She became Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1970-71. She did the occasional double-act at Scots meetings with John Smith, but she rarely became involved in public affairs until 1988, when the Scottish Office planned to concentrate Scotland's most dangerous criminals in Shotts prison. She then threatened Lord Douglas-Hamilton, in deploying the skills which had almost defeated chancellor James Callaghan in 1967.



Herbison... a far-sighted reformer frustrated by male colleagues. She had to fight to get her ideas across

**She resigned from government in 1967 on a point of principle, refusing to advertise the nature of her disagreement or make personal capital out of her stand**

struther-Gray. Peggy's talent was spotted early: she seconded the address in reply to the King's Speech in November 1947, and her gentle Scots schoolmarmish voice made her the only woman to make party political broadcasts in the 1950 and 1961 elections. She served as under-secretary of state for Scotland in the last end of the Attlee government 1950-51.

In opposition, she was an unremarkable, mainstream socialist, favouring party unity, lower prescription charges, better education and opposing apartheid. She became a member of Labour's National Executive in 1961.

**Andrew North**  
Brian Wilson writes: No politician of modern times has better combined the rare qualities of integrity and personal humility than Peggy Herbison. The quiet dignity with which she served the Labour Party, not least at the time of her ministerial resignation, may serve as a timely reminder that the movement is always bigger than any individual within it.

Peggy Herbison resigned quietly from Harold Wilson's government in 1967 on a point of principle. She did not advertise the nature of her disagreement, though it was widely speculated upon. Neither did she seek to make personal capital thereafter

out of her principled stand stating simply that she had no intention of "giving the Tory press a story which would do harm to the Labour Party".

She came from mining stock, and did not need to learn the realities of politics and the instincts of the Tories from any source other than observation and experience. Her husband, John, was immensely proud of the 1945 Labour government's achievements and none more so than the nationalisation of the pits. She recalled in a recent interview: "I can still remember the wonderful meeting we had in the Picture House in Shotts when Herbert Morrison and Pat Dolan came to tell us about the nationalisation of the coal industry. What a feeling of hope there was among the miners and their families."

And when it came to the second reading of that nationalisation bill in the Commons, I was the first person through the division lobby."

She continued to serve the Labour Party in any role that was required of her. At the last general election, she was given a heroic reception when she spoke at the last big rally in Glasgow. Then, at the Monklands East by-election which followed the death of John Smith, it was privileged to chair a wonderful rally at which Tony Blair and Peggy Herbison supported the successful candidacy of Helen Liddell. She was still as sharp as a tack and her message was inspirational.

She got all the honour which she required in her own community of Shotts, where she lived all her life and remained until the end an active and immensely respected figure.

Lesser Jeger adds: In her House of Commons maiden speech in 1945 Margaret Herbison abandoned the convention of not being controversial, making an angry and passionate speech. It was about housing conditions in her North Lanark constituency, especially in the mining area of Shotts where the colliers, bereft of pit-head baths, came home to over-crowded squalid slums with no conveniences in the house and where water had to be carried from a communal pump. She had made her mark.

In 1967 she chaired one of the most explosive of Labour Party conferences. Aneurin Bevan, the left's standard bearer made an earthquake of a platform speech against a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament-inspired resolution. There was anger from the floor when he spoke of sending a Foreign Secretary naked into the conference chamber (a phrase too often quoted out of context) and seemed to rebuke the resolution's supporters for having an "emotional spasm". She seemed almost alone in her composure as the shock of the deafening blows reverberated inside and outside the conference chamber.

The Rt Hon Peggy (Margaret McCrorie) Herbison, politician, born March 12 1907; died December 29, 1996

Baroness Birk

# Labour's dynamo in the Lords

**B**ARONESS Alma Birk, of Regent's Park, London, who has died aged 77, was one of the outstanding women journalists chosen by Harold Wilson as a life peer in 1967 to reinforce Labour's ranks in the House of Lords. She did so with remarkable skill, expertise and a composure that may have surprised some of the sceptics among her former journalistic colleagues who were ever ready, in those days, to underestimate the potential abilities of a female journalist.

portant role for the Labour Party in the Lords, as front bench spokesperson on Environment from 1979 through to 1988. And under Neil Kinnock's leadership she became chief spokesperson for the opposition in the Lords on the arts, heritage, libraries, broadcasting and cable until 1993.

Alma Birk was always a powerhouse of political activity even as a working journalist. I first met her in the early 1960s when we were colleagues on the old Daily Herald. She seemed to be simply non-stop; working on her weekly column, attending countless Labour Party meetings in north London, involved with numerous Jewish welfare groups and equally numerous non-Jewish welfare groups. Her colleagues at the Herald were everlastingly amazed at the energy, resourcefulness and variety of Alma's activities.

Her husband, Ellis Birk, a member of the Mirror Group Board (then the International Publishing Corporation) could hardly have seen much of Alma. Indeed their evening reunions invariably began in one of the Covent Garden pubs, associated with the Daily Herald which had already been acquired by Mirror Group (IPC).

Mireille

# Chansons d'amour

**M**IREILLE, who has died aged 90, was one of the most successful and influential composers of the inter-war French popular song industry. Although little-known outside France, compared with her contemporaries Charles Trenet or Edith Piaf, she established a style of chanson that was at once a departure from the typically tragic and gloomy repertoire of the realist singers and composers and a reaction against the big-band swing coming from America after 1930.

Come Back. Stop. Signed Daddy". The disc by Pills and Tabet became a bestseller, and back in France Mireille — always with Jean Nohain — began to create their individual brand of French song that was taken up by the great singers of the day. For Maurice Chevalier, *Quand un vicomte* (When A Vicomte), for the comedian Draman, *Papa n'a pas voulu* (Daddy Doesn't Want It), above all some songs for Jean Sebbin which helped to make him the most famous of French crooners: *Puisque vous partez en voyage* (Since You Went Away), *Ce petit Chemin* (This Little Road) and *Ferné jusqu'à lundi* (Closed Till Monday).

liberation of Paris, she returned to work, and in 1955 founded the Petit Conservatoire de la Chanson in the Rue de l'Université. For the next 40 years more than 80,000 students auditioned for the school, dedicated to preserving the poetic ideal of true French song among the students who gained fame were Françoise Hardy, Colette Magny and Hugues Aufray. "I remember all the students," Mireille said two years ago, "I was always looking for that little spark which would communicate itself to the public."

Indeed Alma Birk was such a success on the Labour benches in the Lords that it came as no great surprise when Harold Wilson, on becoming prime minister for the third time in March 1974, appointed her Baroness-in-Waiting, an office in the Lords which carries with it the duties of a Government Whip. She held that position until after Harold Wilson's fourth general election victory, in October 1974, when he appointed her under-secretary of state at the Department of the Environment as well as spokesperson in the Lords for three departments — her own at Environment as well as for Transport and Treasury affairs. It was indeed a remarkable accolade for the former Daily Herald columnist and a founding spirit of the groundbreaking women's magazine Nova.

She remained at the Department of the Environment until shortly before the 1979 general election when prime minister James Callaghan appointed her to the prestigious post of minister of state in the Privy Council. As Baroness Birk continued to play an im-

portant role for the Labour Party in the Lords, as front bench spokesperson on Environment from 1979 through to 1988. And under Neil Kinnock's leadership she became chief spokesperson for the opposition in the Lords on the arts, heritage, libraries, broadcasting and cable until 1993.

group hospital management committee 1951-69; lecturer and prison visitor, Holloway Prison, 1967-71; member of the Howard League for Penal Reform since 1948; Youth Service Development Council, 1967-71; vice-president of the Council for Children's Welfare 1968-75; Health Education Council 1969-72; vice-president of Diverse Law Reform Union since 1969; vice-president Redbridge Jewish Youth Centre since 1970; Governor of LSE, British Film Institute and a director of the New Shakespeare Company. She was also a member of the committee of the Albany Trust, chairman of the arts sub-committee, and member of the Holocaust Memorial Committee, the Theatres Trust; the Council of the British Museum Society... where to stop?

Mireille's colleague for some time at the Odéon, Claude Dauphin, was Nohain's brother. "Look, you can write music," he said, "he writes verse, get together." They composed an operetta, *Le Fantôme*, and sent it to the publisher Raoul Breton, but without an immediate response. Meanwhile Mireille went to the United States, where she stayed for three seasons, eventually starting back home with Jean Nohain, in 1929. Her rendition of *If Love Were All* owed everything to the style of café-concert and nothing to the world of Charlie Revues from which Coward hailed.

Patrick O'Connor  
Mireille Hartzuch, singer and songwriter, born 1906; died December 29, 1996

Patrick O'Connor  
Mireille Hartzuch, singer and songwriter, born 1906; died December 29, 1996

Jackdaw



\*Taking a gram or more of vitamin C for the few days leading up to that evening may help your body clear the alcohol more quickly than it normally would. \*If you know that you'll be drinking in a few hours, make sure that you've got something in your stomach.

your neck and chin to create a "beard". The queen bee is placed in a small cage around your neck, or held gently between your lips, and her pheromones will attract the swarm of worker bees to create the impression of copious — if somewhat restless — facial hair. John Phipps of the Beekeepers Quarterly, points out that only those who know absolutely nothing would try to grow a bee beard. "Bee bearders are just showing off. They only do it because it's a new thing to do." He cites the case of the keen American bee bearder, Dr Norman Gary, who does it naked while playing the clarinet.

tion to be held anywhere, ever. 3. 100-mile walking: We mean walking 100 miles all in one go, with no nights in any one place. Just a few of the hazards are vomiting from over-exertion and trench foot from navigating through bogs in the dead of night, but the Long Distance Walkers Association's annual 100-mile event is always over-subscribed.

teams of six, knitted up in a snorkel mask and flippers attempt to whack a 3lb lead puck — known as a "squid" — across the bottom of a swimming pool and into each other's goal. The players have a small stick called a "pusher" and dive down to make contact. It's not the best spectator sport, resembling from the surface nothing so much as a desperate scramble for lost contact lenses.

5. If you fatten up everyone else around you, then you look thinner. 6. Movie-related foods do not have calories because they are part of the entertainment package and not part of one's personal fuel. 7. Cookie pieces contain no calories. The process of breaking the cookie causes calorie leakage. 8. Late-night snacks have no calories. The refrigerator

light is not strong enough for the calories to see their way into the calorie counter. 9. If you are in the process of preparing something, food licked off knives and spoons have no calories. For those preparing for the post-Christmas diet, a few hints to make the new year a little easier. Thanks to Mary Hamner.

Make two copies of a nice friendly message. Tape them together. Feed them to your fax machine and start sending. When the first sheet comes out, quickly tape it to the second sheet to form a loop and so on a long vacation. Useless Office Skill #152 Credit Card Buzzing: Take 2 credit cards and hold them back to back so the bumpy numbers are on the outside. Hold the cards extremely loosely at the edge of the short sides. Now blow air in between the cards. The sound you will hear will precisely express your feelings about the interest you are paying. To keep yourself looking busy until the new year hangerover blues over or until you have got back your work enthusiasm after the party season. From Useless Office Skills at www.jlc.net/usless/

Hang-low

**WHAT YOU'LL NEED:** Water, lots of it. Vitamins C and B-complex. Aspirin or other non-prescription analgesic. Simple foods such as toast and fruit. Honey. Sauerkraut juice. A darkened room. A cool compress or moist washcloth. Tip: A wet washcloth or cool compress on your forehead can help soothe the pain of a headache. If you're too queasy to keep down water or juice, try small sips of flat, room-temperature ginger ale. Take deep and slow breaths and avoid thinking about disturbing topics, eg, the newspapers. Precautionary measures:

Of bees & bogs

**LBEE Bearding:** A pestime only for the fearless or worryingly deranged, bee bearding involves persuading a swarm of bees to gather round

Food fad

1. If you eat something, but no one else sees you eat it, it has no calories. 2. When drinking a diet soda while eating a candy bar, the calories in the candy bar are cancelled by the diet soda. 3. When you eat with someone else, calories don't count as long as you don't eat more than they do. 4. Foods used for medicinal purposes "never" count. Eg hot chocolate, brandy, toast, Sara Lee cheesecake.

Men's Health

LOSE YOUR BELLY! Men's Health magazine suggests a few weekend hobbies to stop you returning to the Betty Sporing status in the new year.

Time-waster

USELESS Office Skill #163 Telephone Songs. You can play music on your phone by pressing the buttons on the (2, 2, 5) and along the side (5, 7, 8, 0). They sound even worse than the others. Happy Birthday 112168 Auld Lang Syne 1113212 221136# #9331212 3211#91 Frere Jacques 12311231 56369 9#9631, 9#9631 191, 191 Mary Had a Little Lamb 321233 222, 399 321233 322321 Useless Office Skill #141 The Endless Fax: This stunt is guaranteed not to make you Employee of the Month, you'll be greatly relieved to know.

Water stops

Jackdaw wants Jewels. E-mail Jackdaw@guarlan.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4082; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Emily Sheffield

Emily Sheffield

مكتبة الامم



Withering of the world's workshop, page 12

Service sector firms top the market, page 12

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Olympic success helps to fill Britain's yacht sales



BRITAIN'S boat industry has been given a boost by the medal-winning performance of the country's yachtsmen at the Olympics earlier this year, writes Nicholas Barnister.

Tony Beechey, chairman of the British Marine Industries Federation, said that the industry's turnover in 1996 would be well ahead of the £1.87 billion total for 1995 and that the upturn should continue into 1997.

The London Boat Show, which opens at Earls Court on Friday, will reflect the resurgence of interest, with sailing boats rather than motor vessels dominating the exhibition's central pool.

But Britain's power boat builders have had a bumper year. "There has been a great resurgence in the sale of power boats, 90 per cent of which are exported," Mr Beechey said.

For example, Sunseekers has sold eight boats, each worth between £1.5 million and £2 million, to overseas buyers since August.

Sales of sail boats, which have been picking up slowly over the past 18 months, have been lifted by the Olympic success of Ben Ainslie, silver medal winner in the Laser class, and John Merricks and Ian Walker (pictured left), who came second in the 470 class.

The British teams' performance has sparked interest in dinghy sailing among young people.

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARRON

Notebook

Honours with a whiff of lavender



Edited by Alex Brummer

THERE are distinct echoes of the late Harold Wilson's lavender resignation honours list in John Major's pre-election offering from Downing Street.

By far the most puzzling choice is the peerage for Raj Bagri, chairman of the London Metal Exchange, which was caught up in the biggest fraud scandal in financial history — the £1.8 billion loss at Sumitomo.

It could be argued that David Rowland, the chairman of Lloyd's of London, deserves his knighthood for seeing the London insurance market through the worst crisis in its history, when it lost £8 billion, and back to safety.

Among changes still needed is the establishment of a regulatory regime which will be firm and transparent enough to persuade American names that the new Lloyd's has abandoned poor custom and practice.

Of course, it is custom and practice for civil servants to be rewarded for loyal service.

But the taxpayer must wonder if Christopher Wilcock, who handled the nuclear privatisation, deserves anything. Instead of garnering the £3 billion originally envisaged, British Energy was hopelessly bundled and eventually sold for £1.4 billion.

There is nothing wrong with honours as such: but if the Government is serious about wanting Britain to be the enterprise centre of Europe then it should award people like John Neill of Unipart, Bernd Fischer of BMW-Rover, Peter Wood of Direct Line and Sir Richard Greenbury of M&S who have invested in real jobs in Britain.

Housing hazard

FORECASTING the housing market can be as hazardous as predicting the stock market. Although, strictly speaking, rational economic factors such as personal disposable income and interest rates should be the main guide to house prices, the market in homes, like that for sterling or shares, can gather a momentum of its own.

The Halifax suggests in its 1997 forecast today that next year, like 1996, will see growth of 7 per cent, with a similar rise in 1998. Putting aside whether rises on this

Dutch life firm buys US group

Aegon's chairman, Kees Storm, said the two companies were highly compatible. "The expansion of our traditional life insurance business, with its steady performance, provides a solid foundation for the high-growth asset accumulation and pension business we have been pursuing."

The deal — the largest life insurance acquisition in the US and one of the biggest in the world — is more evidence of the increasingly rapid consolidation in the sector.

Under the deal, expected to be completed in the first half of 1997, Provident shareholders will receive Aegon shares worth \$3.62 billion. Aegon will take on about \$780 million of debt and \$100 million of preference stock.

Provident Corporation, based in Louisville, Kentucky, operates throughout the US with 9,000 employees. The group includes Provident Bancorp, a consumer lending unit that will be spun off as a separate company. Provident's three insurance divisions — the agency group, direct insurance group, and capital management group — will become part of Aegon USA.

Aegon is one of the world's 10 largest listed companies, with assets of more than \$100 billion. Three-quarters of its business is in life insurance and pensions. It is based in The Hague, operates in the Netherlands, the US, UK, Spain and Hungary, and has 5,500 staff. A company spokesman said it was too early to discuss the impact on US jobs.

City's reputation washes whiter in rain of Ks from the new year list

RAJ BAGRI, chairman of the London Metal Exchange, whose reputation as a leading marketeer has been severely undermined by the world's worst copper scandal, has been made a life peer in the honours list.

Mr Bagri's ennoblement comes only 10 days after the LME was lambasted by the Securities and Investments Board, which produced a seven-point plan to repair the damage inflicted to London's reputation for metals dealing in the wake of the £1.8 billion Sumitomo affair.

The LME chairman, who is also chairman of the metal trader Metalix, has strongly defended the role of his market executive against accusations that weaknesses in its regulatory systems allowed a rogue trader to perpetrate a massive copper fraud.

David Rowland also has a knighthood for his services to the insurance industry after grappling to cap the £8 billion losses incurred by the Lloyd's market. Sir David is joined by Graeme Odgers, chairman of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, who has been accused of being an industrial muscle rather than standing up for the consumer.

And the Government's chief economic adviser Alan Budd also becomes a knight.

Christopher Wilcock, the former head of the nuclear power privatisation team at the Department of Trade and Industry, joins the list of knights even though shares in the highly contentious privatisation, which fell below the offer price, have only just started to show a profit for investors.

List of those made CBE includes David Cawthra, former director of infrastructure services privatisation at the British Railways Board, and Honor Chapman, a partner of Jones Lang Wootton and one of the few businesswomen to be honoured.

More worrying was the finding that business failures have actually increased everywhere, apart from Scotland, Wales, London and the South-East.

In particular, there was a sharp rise in the number of failures in the East Midlands — part of Britain's traditional industrial heartland — where failures jumped by almost 18 per cent, while the West Midlands also showed a significant increase.

Labour seized on the survey, claiming it supported the impression given by other figures recently that the recovery had "levelled out", and that manufacturing was stagnating.

Meanwhile, a report from the strength of the economy are grossly over optimistic.

The only bright spot in the survey — which Dun and Bradstreet called "disappointing" — is that small businesses are continuing to enjoy the fruits of the recovery, with a 5.5 per cent fall in small business bankruptcies, against a 6.5 per cent increase in company liquidations.

Philip Mellor, senior analyst at Dun and Bradstreet, said: "It shows that pressures of cash flow on larger businesses are tending to in-

New gloom on business failures

EVIDENCE that Britain's economic recovery may be weaker than previously assumed has come from two respected independent surveys.

According to a report from Dun and Bradstreet, the business information service, the fall in the annual rate of business failures has almost dried up while the number of business failures is still running at 790 a week.

The survey, to be published today, reports that there were 41,107 business failures in 1996 — a drop of just 0.5 per cent on the figures for 1995.

Margaret Beckett, shadow trade and industry secretary, added: "These figures show the Government's claims for the strength of the economy are grossly over optimistic."

The only bright spot in the survey — which Dun and Bradstreet called "disappointing" — is that small businesses are continuing to enjoy the fruits of the recovery, with a 5.5 per cent fall in small business bankruptcies, against a 6.5 per cent increase in company liquidations.

Philip Mellor, senior analyst at Dun and Bradstreet, said: "It shows that pressures of cash flow on larger businesses are tending to in-

crease, and this may well cause problems for smaller companies in 1997."

Meanwhile, a report from the strength of the economy are grossly over optimistic.

The only bright spot in the survey — which Dun and Bradstreet called "disappointing" — is that small businesses are continuing to enjoy the fruits of the recovery, with a 5.5 per cent fall in small business bankruptcies, against a 6.5 per cent increase in company liquidations.

Meanwhile, a report from the strength of the economy are grossly over optimistic.

The only bright spot in the survey — which Dun and Bradstreet called "disappointing" — is that small businesses are continuing to enjoy the fruits of the recovery, with a 5.5 per cent fall in small business bankruptcies, against a 6.5 per cent increase in company liquidations.

Philip Mellor, senior analyst at Dun and Bradstreet, said: "It shows that pressures of cash flow on larger businesses are tending to in-

Water stops at free-market lock

more on competition to improve efficiency and services. It would also bolster his argument that the privatised water and sewerage companies should keep their separate identities — and stock exchange quotations — to give him sufficient scope for making industry-wide comparisons.

Mr Byatt has argued that water companies subject to takeover from outside the industry should be resisted on the stock market as soon as possible, with at least 25 per cent of their shares being traded freely.

But ministers are believed to have accepted arguments that the cost of building a national grid for water, similar to those which already exist for gas and electricity, would be prohibitive, and would raise insurmountable problems in terms of compatibility, quality and safety.

They are also having doubts about the more modest "common carriage" proposals, under which a customer could buy water from one company but have it delivered by another.

The Environment Agency said yesterday that moving water from one catchment area to another could cause environmental problems, especially in the rivers used for transferring it.

House prices 'have a sixties swing'

THE Halifax, Britain's biggest mortgage lender, today predicts a return to the steadier housing market growth of the 1960s.

In its annual review of the housing market, the Halifax says prices have risen by about 7 per cent this year, far more than its forecast of 2 per cent.

Richard Miles expected to rise by more than 10 per cent, compared with a 7 per cent increase in property sales during 1996.

The Halifax, which plans to become a bank through a stock market flotation in June, says the recovery in the housing market is "well established" and should be sustained while any rises in interest rates are moderate.

Cuts in personal tax announced in the Budget should help to sustain the upturn, while action taken by lenders to curb mortgage discounts and cash-back offers will also contribute to steady improvement, the Halifax says.

High levels of personal debt will also prevent too sharp a housing market recovery in the early months of 1997.

Rail fares cut to take on airlines

RAIL FARES between London and Scotland as a price war erupted between airlines and rail companies.

The Great North Eastern Railway, owned by Sea Containers and operator of the East Coast mainline service, cut the price of a single fare from London to Scotland from £45 to just £19, undercutting scheduled air fares and bringing tariffs closer to coach fares.

Christopher Garnett, GNER chief executive, said: "Going by rail is cheaper than flying, much quicker than coach travel and at this price a real alternative to taking the car."

The move, which comes into force on Sunday, follows GNER's decision last August to cut fares from Scotland to London to £19. The company said the price cut had boosted demand for seats. Coupled with other price-cutting moves, more advertising of a healthier economy, the lower fares had encouraged 750,000 more passengers on to GNER services since April.

The new 15 single fares apply on all 15 services from London King's Cross to Edinburgh, Motherwell and Glasgow. Fares to Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness were also pegged at £23. Tickets must be booked a week in advance. GNER's strategy takes it into head-on competition with airlines such as EasyJet which specialise in cheap fares.

Nicholas Barnister Technology Editor

THE Government is close to a decision that will leave the water companies as the only utilities subject to detailed regulation rather than the market forces of competition.

Ministers are believed to intend to abandon plans to introduce widespread competition into the water industry on the grounds that it would be costly and impracticable.

Such a move will greatly strengthen the policing role of Ian Byatt, the industry regulator, at a time when telecommunications, gas and electricity industries are relying

Table with columns: TOURIST RATES - BANK SELLS, listing rates for various countries like Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, USA.



**THE REAL PICTURE**/The closure of Yorkshire's Ferrybridge power station could spell doom for what waterways campaigners say should be a 'liquid motorway' to the North. Photograph: Don McPhee/Words: Martyn Haisall



**T**HE closure of Yorkshire's Ferrybridge power station in five years' time threatens one of Britain's most important canal systems, waterways campaigners are claiming. Government must end its long indifference, they say, to

the "liquid motorways" now enjoying a revival as leisure traffic joins industrial shipments on silent, reflective journeys reducing lorry transport. Geoff Asprey, who moved to the Ferrybridge area seven years ago to set up an

education and pleasure canal-cruise business, said a vital link in the Aire and Calder Navigation could die without the daily passage of the coal barges, which act as dredgers. "The power station is closing in five years' time

and that's the major traffic — 45,000 tonnes a week — so they need a replacement budget," he said. Heavy transport hurtled across the skyline by the power station, whose vast cooling towers overshadowed the lock-keeper's

office. Landscaping and new moorings have encouraged leisure traffic, from bird-watchers to narrow-boaters, in waters navigated by the Romans. Lock-keepers David Barker and Gary Bottomley look out on a canal-side

once alive with bonded warehouses for bacon and sugar, liquorice and molasses. Barges unloaded Cornish clay for local potteries and sand for glass first produced for Roman villas. Mr Asprey said: "There's nothing about the river you

can say is impossible, it's all been done. You are talking of thousands of tons coming in, in one go — and there's no road rage on the waterways." He said government should penalise heavy goods being taken by road

which could form suitable canal cargoes. Without a "replacement budget" to compensate for lost traffic, he said, environmentally friendly transport, and 2,000 years of commercial history, could disappear down the river.

**Share success hides industrial malaise**

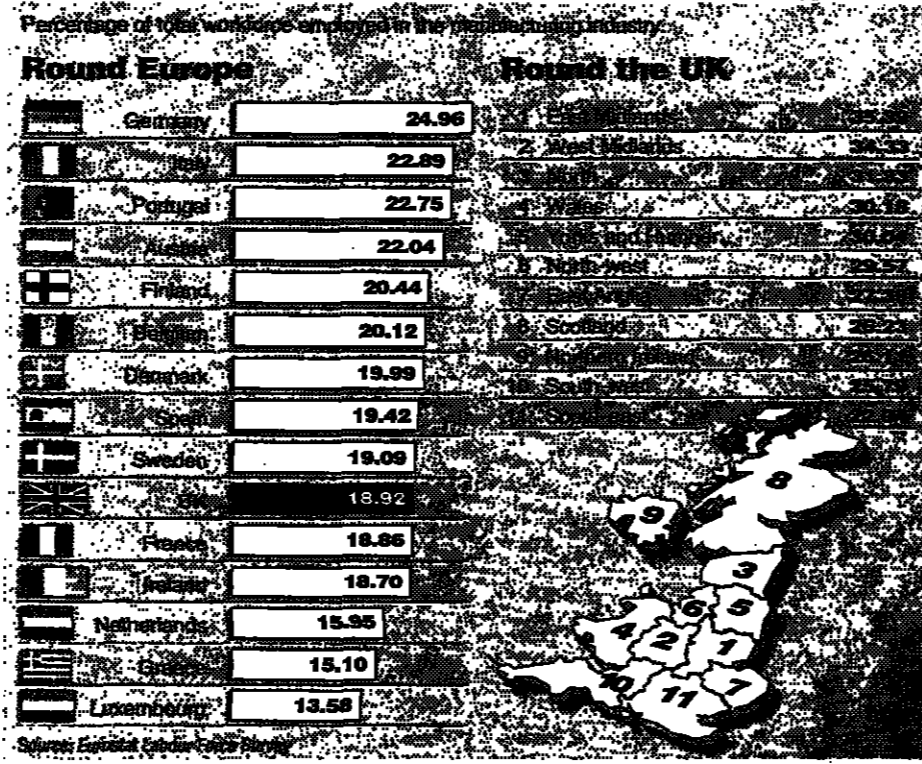
# Footsie charts changes to UK plc

**IAN KING finds service sector firms floating to the top of stock market**

**W**HEN Courtaulds and Pilkington, two of the pillars of the industrial establishment, were dumped out of the FTSE-100 index of leading shares last week, it was a sad moment for those who cherish Britain's industrial heritage. Ironically, the pair were replaced by Hays, the distribution and recruitment group, and Mercury Asset Management, two companies epitomising the new service-based businesses which have increasingly made their mark on the commercial landscape. The move could be seen as summing up Britain's industrial decline — Pilkington, a business founded in 1826, and Courtaulds, a company whose origins go back to 1809, being replaced by a company owned by the Kuwaiti Investment Office as recently as 1980 (Hays), and one of the biggest players in a sector (financial management) frequently accused of short-termism. The shake-up was also in line with the other promotion and relegation issues that have taken place in Britain's leading share index this year. For instance, this year has seen the disappearance from

the Footsie of Cookson, the industrial materials group, and Rexam, the paper and printing group, and the arrival of Orange, the mobile phone operator, and retailers such as Argos and Next. Next year is likely to see even greater domination by service-based companies, with at least three of the newly floated building societies — Halifax, Woolwich, and Alliance and Leicester — all certain to join the Footsie. Does it matter? The answer is yes. Footsie membership, a huge boost to a company's status and the tracker funds that proliferate in the pensions and peeps market have to buy and sell shares in companies according to whether they are in the index or not. So companies heading for the exit have found that progress hastened, once index funds have started selling their shares in anticipation of relegation. This can destabilise a business and in some cases make it harder to raise money in the City. The Footsie is also a snapshot of economic health and of those sectors of the economy that are doing well. Taken in this context, the pressures on company managers have intensified during the 1990s and the shake-up of the index has been more wide-ranging. Of the Footsie's original 100

**Manufacturing heavyweights**



firms when the index began on January 3 1984, only 54 now remain, while a significant number of big industrial names — like Plessey, Ferranti and Trafalgar House — have been taken over. That first index is intriguing reading. Most stocks were in manufacturing or industry, which accounted for just over two-thirds of the index, while service stocks, such as those in food and drink, finance, leisure and retailing,

masked in part by the arrival of the former nationalised industries in the Footsie, starting with British Telecom in December 1984, although Ferranti and British Petroleum — both partly government-owned — featured in the original index. Since then, the representation in the Footsie of the utilities and privatised industries has grown rapidly, and former nationalised companies now make up 15 per cent of the index.

Builders, or companies linked to the housing market, spring to mind — Barratt, Wimpey, and Berkeley have all vanished, while Sears, Johnson Matthey, English China Clays, Dalgety and Harrison & Crossfield have had difficulties. Some, like Berkeley, are now marooned in the financial equivalent of the Bazaar Homes League. As fascinating as the original index itself is noting some of the more colourful companies to have featured in the Footsie over the years. For instance, Polly Peck, Asil Nadir's company, was a member from October 1989 to October 1990, while British & Commonwealth — the company which collapsed after the disastrous acquisition of Atlantic Computers — featured in the index from April

# Workshop of the world has put up the shutters

**MARK MILNER on figures showing how Britain's manufacturing has withered**

**B**RIITAIN has only two representatives in a European Union top 20 of manufacturing regions, according to research published today by the GMB trade union. The findings, based on a labour-force survey compiled by Eurostat, represent an indictment of Conservative industrial policy and underline the need for greater investment in manufacturing industry, according to the GMB. The research ranks the East Midlands fifteenth in a list based on the percentage of jobs taken by manufacturing,

while the West Midlands scrapes in at number 20. The report shows that six of the regions with the heaviest concentrations of manufacturing jobs are in Germany, where unemployment is about four million. Italian regions claim another three top 10 places. Top of the list is Baden-Württemberg, where manufacturing jobs account for 43 per cent of the total. That compares with 35.4 per cent in the East Midlands and 34.4 per cent in the West Midlands. The next most highly placed UK region is the North-west, at 27. Wales takes thirty-first place, Scotland ranks number 48 and Northern Ireland fifty-first. The lowest scoring UK region is the South-east, where barely one job in five is in manufacturing. The GMB's general secretary, John Edmonds, said:

"Nothing illustrates better the dismal failure of Tory industrial policy than this league table. There was a time when Britain was the workshop of the world, and the West Midlands was the workshop of Britain. Now the West Midlands just scrapes into the top 20. It was fashionable in the early days of Thatcherism to say that manufacturing did not matter. It does. The prosperity of Europe's regions is in direct relationship to their manufacturing base. The UK needs a sustained period of investment in its manufacturing industries to secure the country's future." Though most British regions clock up below average scores, the area which comes out with the lowest score is the Brussels region, home of the European Commission, where industry accounts for just over 15 per cent of the employment total.

**News in brief**

**Unfair dismissal cases increase**

The number of unfair dismissal cases has increased by a third over the past five years, according to figures disclosed in a parliamentary answer by trade and industry minister John Taylor. Industrial Tribunals heard almost 10,000 cases in the year to March 1996, compared with fewer than 7,000 in 1991-92. The success rate has fallen from 45 per cent to 38 per cent, but that still left more successful verdicts than five years ago.

**Lucky purchase**

Pools company Littlewoods has bought UK Charity Lotteries, operator of the Lucky lottery brand which operates mainly in London and the South-east. The combination of Lucky with Littlewoods' existing Scratchies scratchcards business will produce total turnover of £70,000.

**Bank staff 'solid'**

Finance union Biff has predicted a "massive response" to a call for a Scottish bank strike on Thursday. The strike, called to defend the traditional January 2 holiday

north of the border, involves nearly 16,000 staff at Bank of Scotland, Clydesdale, Royal Bank of Scotland, TSB Scotland plus Lloyds Bank subsidiary.

**Yard chief cops art**

The former head of Scotland Yard's Art and Antiques Squad is to join Nordstern, the art and antiques insurance company which operates in Munich in the recovery of art. The recovery of art, which involves the use of risk-prevention strategies and advise clients on security and recovery of stolen items.

**Rochet leads rescue**

Marc Rochet, the chairman of the French subsidiary of British Airways, TAT, was yesterday appointed chairman of Air Liberté, marking the long-awaited takeover by BA of the insolvent French carrier. Under the rescue plan, BA is expected to take a 70 per cent stake and its partner, Banque Paribas, 30 per cent.

Northern Electric yesterday recommended that shareholders accept a £782 million offer from US utility CalEnergy, ending the controversial two-month takeover battle for the British utility.

صحة من الامل

Pillar Cup C



Racing Pillar to test Hill's Cup credentials

Chris Hawkins
COOME HILL, the highly impressive Honesty winner, was the subject of a \$4,000 bet with Coral for the Cheltenham Gold Cup yesterday and was cut to 9-1 from 12's.

There seems to be a good chance of Caterick going ahead today, in which case Nick The Beak (1.50), trained by John Upson, looks a sure bet.

There seems to be a good chance of Caterick going ahead today, in which case Nick The Beak (1.50), trained by John Upson, looks a sure bet.



All to play for... Rawl (centre) and Darryll Holland turn home at Lingfield with a narrow lead which they maintained to the line. PHOTO: FRANK BARON

Holland head-hunted for Kelleway job

GAY Kelleway wants Darryll Holland to be her stable jockey for next year.

"I need someone like him for the ride on Musher in the 2,000 Guineas. Also, Sorbie Tower will be going for Group One races and Russian Music needs a good jockey."

At Leopardstown yesterday, Theatreworld bounced back to form when he made all the running for an impressive success in the December Festival Hurdle.

"We have tied his tongue down since the Bula Hurdle and I made no secret of the fact he was working much better since."

winning trainer Aidan O'Brien. O'Brien revealed that Urubande is his likely main Ladbrooke hope.

Catterick the one ray of hope

ONLY Catterick, due to race today and tomorrow, holds out serious hopes of being able to stage a jump racing over the next few days as the sport remains firmly in an icy grip.

Inspection. Some frost is still in the ground. Exeter, one of six scheduled turf meetings tomorrow, was called off yesterday.

Troodos won in fast time at Sedgfield recently, over an extra two furlongs, and there is no doubt about his ability to see out this extended three miles and a furlong.

Catterick card with guide to the latest form

Table with 2 columns: Race details (e.g., 1.00 Breeze Point, 1.00 Kettlewell) and horse names/odds.

Table with 2 columns: Race details (e.g., 2.00 Breeze Point, 2.00 Kettlewell) and horse names/odds.

Lingfield all-weather Flat programme with form guide

Table with 2 columns: Race details (e.g., 1.00 Breeze Point, 1.00 Kettlewell) and horse names/odds.

Table with 2 columns: Race details (e.g., 2.00 Breeze Point, 2.00 Kettlewell) and horse names/odds.

Results

Table listing race results from various tracks including Lingfield, Doncaster, and York, with columns for race number, horse name, and jockey.

Fontwell Park runners and riders

Table listing runners and riders for Fontwell Park races, including race numbers, horse names, and jockeys.

Fontwell Park runners and riders

Table listing runners and riders for Fontwell Park races, including race numbers, horse names, and jockeys.

Fontwell Park runners and riders

Table listing runners and riders for Fontwell Park races, including race numbers, horse names, and jockeys.



Soccer

Royale plugs a gap with Phelan

TERRY PHELAN'S brief and undistinguished Chelsea career ended abruptly yesterday when he was sold to Everton... The Republic of Ireland international defender will complete the formalities of a £800,000 transfer...

Duffy lands at Hibernian

JIM DUFFY was appointed manager of Hibernian in Scotland yesterday when, at the expense of the club's controlling shareholder Tom Farmer, he was flown by helicopter to Easter Road...

Ince banned for four matches

THE England midfielder Paul Ince was given a four-match ban yesterday for protesting with foul language and abusive gestures after he was sent off in an Italian League match...

Ski Hotline

Advertisement for Ski Hotline, SkiPost, and Ski Snapshot, providing ski reports and conditions from 200 resorts in Europe and North America.

Ruud Gullit was promoted to player-manager... The AC Milan forward Denier was expected to join Manchester United in the summer...

Bryan Robson could be forced into a comeback at Arsenal tomorrow, 10 days short of his 40th birthday... The Middlesbrough manager, who may be without as many as 10 players, said: "I'm definitely in the squad and then it depends on the injuries whether I start the game..."

The Manchester United full-back Phil Neville has been ruled out for a month after going down with glandular fever... His illness is an untimely blow for a club already without Gary Pallister...



Cup pointer? ... Stevenage's manager Paul Fairclough gives instructions during Saturday's visit of Hayes, who were 3-0 down when the game was abandoned at half-time FRANK BARON

FACUP PROFILE Stevenage face welcome distraction

REVENGE is a dish best eaten cold. So when Barry Hayes runs on to the pitch at St Andrews on Saturday he will have ice in his heart rather than fire in his belly...

Eighteen months ago the Steve Bull of Stevenage Borough was given a trial by Birmingham City and was devastated when nothing came of it... "I'm looking forward to going there and proving them wrong..."

Hayes has been Stevenage's top scorer for the past two seasons and his 29 goals in the Vauxhall Conference last season helped them to the championship...

Unwittingly, however, his goals may also have helped plunge Borough into more controversy than is appropriate for a club with only 30 years' history...

It all began to go wrong for the overachieving non-League club when they took the Conference title, it was a hollow triumph, as they be-

came the third Conference side in a row to be denied promotion to the Football League because their ground was not up to scratch on the cut-off date of December 31...

The club's response was to launch a High Court action against the Football League, claiming that the denial of promotion was "unreasonable restraint of trade"...

There the matter should have ended, but the legal action proved to have an unpleasant postscript when the court heard that the innocent Hayes was worth his weight in gold to Stevenage in more ways than even he could have suspected...

Last March, the court was told, the Stevenage chairman, Victor Green had made an unexpected phone call to the Torquay United chairman Mike Bateson...

According to Bateson, Green said an unnamed club had offered £100,000 for Hayes. He then suggested that Torquay should pay Stevenage £30,000 not to sell the striker. Had Hayes been sold, Woking, who were second in

'A misconduct charge can carry any level of punishment. Relegation is within the FA's wide range of powers'

Report by Mark Redding

players to win the championship. Bateson said later: "He never called back..."

As a result of those allegations the Football Association has charged Stevenage with misconduct. A date for the hearing has yet to be set for what is a case without precedent...

It means that all the hard work that has led to the club's climb up the non-League pyramid with four championships in six years including a first Conference title and their best run in the FA Cup, could be undone almost overnight...

and financial provisos have also been relaxed. Seemingly distracted by their turbulent summer, this season Stevenage got off to an indifferent start...

But Birmingham need to beware. The club are beginning to find their feet again. They are sixth in the table with games in hand and, having disposed of Third Division Leyton Orient before 7,000 in east London in the last round, they are ready for the big time...

First out of the hat in the draw, they switched the tie to Birmingham where there is a 26,000 capacity, and they will be hoping that history repeats itself. Two years ago Kidderminster went to St Andrews, knocked Birmingham out of the Cup at the same stage and went on to take the Conference title...

"Our prime concern is to win the Conference and try to get into the Football League," said Green. "The success in the Cup is wonderful for the town and our supporters, but we hope if we do well against League opposition it will boost the confidence of our team and work in our favour..."

Results

Soccer: NLS LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION: Portsmouth 1-0 Reading; Millwall 1-0 Ipswich...

Chess: HASTINGS PREMIER TOURNAMENT: China 1-0 England; China 2-0 England...

Tennis: AUSTRALIAN MEN'S HARD COURT CHAMPIONSHIP (Adelaide): First round: J. Hines 6-4, 6-3, 6-4; M. J. Taylor 6-4, 6-3, 6-4...

Cricket: LIMITED-OVERS MATCH: New Zealand 156-9 (Zachary Elton 60, Steven Croft 47) beat England 149-7 (S. Broad 58, Ian Jones 47)...

Darts: WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Preston): Group in 9: Scotland (Ging) 10-5, Butler (M) 9-5, D. Smith (Eng) 10-5, K. Spinks (W) 10-5...

Ice Hockey: SUPERLEAGUE Nottingham 5, Newcastle 3...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Fixtures

Soccer: NLS LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION: Reading v Millwall, Ipswich v Portsmouth...

Chess: HASTINGS PREMIER TOURNAMENT: England v China, England v China...

Tennis: AUSTRALIAN MEN'S HARD COURT CHAMPIONSHIP (Adelaide): Second round: J. Hines 6-4, 6-3, 6-4...

Cricket: LIMITED-OVERS MATCH: New Zealand v England...

Darts: WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Preston): Group in 9: Scotland (Ging) 10-5, Butler (M) 9-5, D. Smith (Eng) 10-5...

Ice Hockey: SUPERLEAGUE Nottingham 5, Newcastle 3...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Baseball: PREMIER LEAGUE GUILDFORD 7, Slough 2; Kingston 2, Tottenham 7; Maidenhead 0, Poole 2...

Wednesday band banned on Wednesday

The season of goodwill ended abruptly for Sheffield Wednesday's Sheffield Wednesday's band yesterday when they were barred from their club's New Year's Day fixtures...

The nine-strong group were told they were not welcome at Derby because of fears expressed by the home club's safety officer and other Baseball Ground officials...

They are concerned that home fans in sections adjoining the away end may be provoked by the visitors' drums and brass support...

Despite board-level lobbying on the musicians' behalf, their songs - which were to include a version of And Lang Syne for the day - will be absent...

The band leader John Hemmingham said: "We will go with our instruments and leave them outside when we go in if they insist, but it does seem a bit ridiculous to say the least..."

At Chelsea on Saturday the away section was both below and next to home fans but there was no trouble at all. Chelsea fans - hardly known as the nicest people as a general rule - were even joining in...

Members of the Wednesday band are said to be furious at the snub, which they suspect is more to do with discouraging noisy support than any real safety concern...

But a spokesman for Derby, which will have a jazz band of its own at the game, said: "Our safety officer has deemed it inappropriate for the band to be allowed in because of the lay-out of our away end..."

The Sheffield band are welcome at their ground but this is the Baseball Ground and we can provide the entertainment...

Sport in brief

Rugby Union: Ricky Evans, the former Wales prop who left Llanelli for Cardiff last month, will make a final "guest" appearance for the Scarlets against Gwent on Saturday...

Darts: Michael Adams, top seed in the Hastings Premier, crashed to his third successive defeat when Edouard Rozentalis, the Lithuanian champion, outplayed him in a 50-move Caro-Kann...

Tennis: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Baseball: The 24-year-old centre Simon Beetham joined Nottingham yesterday and is set to play in Saturday's league match at Newcastle...

Darts: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Tennis: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Baseball: The 24-year-old centre Simon Beetham joined Nottingham yesterday and is set to play in Saturday's league match at Newcastle...

Darts: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Tennis: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Baseball: The 24-year-old centre Simon Beetham joined Nottingham yesterday and is set to play in Saturday's league match at Newcastle...

Darts: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Tennis: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Baseball: The 24-year-old centre Simon Beetham joined Nottingham yesterday and is set to play in Saturday's league match at Newcastle...

Darts: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Tennis: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Baseball: The 24-year-old centre Simon Beetham joined Nottingham yesterday and is set to play in Saturday's league match at Newcastle...

Darts: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Tennis: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Baseball: The 24-year-old centre Simon Beetham joined Nottingham yesterday and is set to play in Saturday's league match at Newcastle...

Darts: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Tennis: Dennis Priestley, top seed in the Red Bank World Championship at Purfleet, made a basic miscalculation during his group match with the American Steve Brown yesterday...

Baseball: The 24-year-old centre Simon Beetham joined Nottingham yesterday and is set to play in Saturday's league match at Newcastle...

Vertical advertisement on the right edge of the page, partially cut off, with text including 'Stal gets', 'I can next y says f', 'Police Leach', and 'Hockey Marsh kick-'.



Sports Honours

# Stalwart Bedser finally gets his knighthood

Frank Keating

**A**LEC BEDSER'S long-overdue knighthood will be bestowed on the cricketer this morning, as an already raucously acclaimed year for the batsman Steven Redgrave and racing driver Damon Hill ends with a final song for each from the British establishment.

There is a CBE for Redgrave to go with the MBE he received in 1996, and an OBE for Hill.

In the New Year's Honours List there are also MBEs for the England and Scotland soccer internationals David Seaman and Paul McStay, and for rugby's Martin Offiah.

Bedser's knighthood seemed unlikely when he was

awarded the CBE in 1992, the year after this previously stalwart bowler retired as chairman of England's selectors at a record 13 years.

At the time, the endearing old heart-of-oak yeoman said with a shrug: "A knighthood? They are for fancy-dress businessmen. The last ruddy bowler to get one was Sir Francis Drake."

As a strapping and untiringly skilful medium-pace bowler, Bedser bowled his books off for England in the post-war era. He took 236 Test wickets at 24 apiece. (For his beloved Surrey he took more than 1,900 at only 20. Awestruck John Major quipped up for his autograph.)

Bedser was the one English bowler of his time who unsettled the Australian ace (and

soon-to-be knight) Don Bradman, and once did for him in five successive Test innings. Half a century ago this February, Bedser clean-bowled Bradman for a duck in the Adelaide Test. The Australian still acknowledges it as the finest ball he ever received — "truly magnificent, an inswinging which began outside off stump, it hit the pitch on leg stump and snapped back to take out middle-and-off".

Remind Bedser of that ball this morning as he ticks proudly into his self-cooked breakfast at Woking opposite his identical twin Eric and he would mutter: "Yeah, I bowled quite a few like that, but most bats weren't good enough to miss 'em."

As a selector, Bedser's most fruitful decisions, in hind-

sight, were to drop Ian Botham as England's pug upon captain in 1981 and at once let loose the young lion under the recalled Mike Brearley, and, four years earlier in 1977, to persuade the sulking mopey Geoffrey Boycott back into the Test fold.

Poor, good Alec had to spend two hours in Boycott's car at the M1 Watford gap service station chivvying the errant Tyke to return, although to have "to coerce a man into playing for England was one of the most distasteful things of my life". But it was for England's good.

Another opening bowler, Ossie Whistley, is also honoured this morning. He bowled vibrant and swinging for Glamorgan through the 1960s off an unathletic lol-



Bedser... long overdue



Redgrave... four golds



Offiah... whizz on the wing

Rugby League

# Rhinos capture final imports

Paul Fitzpatrick

**L**EADS RHINOS have filled their overseas register with the signings of the Tongan prop Martin Masella and the Australian hooker Wayne Collins.

Both are 27 and Leeds hope they will provide the experience the side too often lacked during the first Super League season when they finished third from bottom.

Masella has played with Newcastle, Balmain and South Sydney. Collins was a member of the Canberra Raiders squad for the World Club Challenge match with Widnes at Old Trafford in 1995; he has since played for Sydney St George and last season, for the South Queensland Crushers.

Masella, described by the Leeds coach Dean Bell as a "no-nonsense type of forward" was in the Tonga side in the 1995 World Cup and their coach Mike McClean, formerly of St Helens, recommended him to Leeds.

When Gary Hetherington became Leeds' chief executive in October he promised that no time would be wasted in strengthening the squad. Ryan Sheridan, Dean Lawford and Anthony Farrell were signed from Hetherington's former club Sheffield and Paul Sterling from Hull. Hetherington then turned his attention overseas and recruited Richie Blackmore, Jamie Mathou and Damian Gibson.

There will now inevitably be some departures, and Leeds are likely to part with the Tongan forward George Mann and the Kiwi forward Gary Mercer as well as Paul Gleadhill and Lee Maher, who both have been training with Featherstone Rovers.

The First Division club Widnes Vikings have appointed Shane Cooper, the 36-year-old former St Helens and New Zealand scrum-half, to their coaching staff. Cooper, who joined Widnes from St Helens 18 months ago, will take charge of the Alliance side but does not intend to stop playing.

Doug Loughton will now have the title of manager, with Bernard Long promoted from Alliance to first-team coach. Colin Whiffield, the former Salford, Wigan and Halifax full-back, replaces Graham Liptrot as Academy coach.

St Helens will not switch tomorrow's return challenge match with Wigan to Central Park if their Knowsley Road pitch is unfit at an inspection today.

David Howes, St Helens' chief executive, said: "Originally we did consider a switch to Wigan but a decision would have been needed last week to arrange the cover. If the match is off it will be rearranged at Knowsley Road."

Saints, 32-22 down from the first leg, will still be without their international stand-off Karl Hamman, host of the death of his younger brother.

Tennis

# 'I can be No. 1 next year' says Hingis

**M**ARTINA HINGIS believes she can crown her meteoric rise by dethroning Steffi Graf as the women's No. 1 in 1997 — a prediction as fearless as the 16-year-old's game.

Graf, 10 years Hingis's senior, has predicted the Swiss newcomer will depose her sooner rather than later. Hingis did not argue with that view after ending her first senior year at an astonishing No. 4 in the rankings.

Asked yesterday whether it would take another three years to reach the top, Hingis illustrated her self-belief by replying: "I hope it's not going to be that long to be No. 1."

She dismissed the chances of burn-out. "I am not Austin, Capricorn or Jaeger," she said. "I am just myself and I have a different style of tennis. Sometimes you see that they made a mistake in life."

Hingis credits her balanced attitude to her mother, Melanie, a former Czech cham-

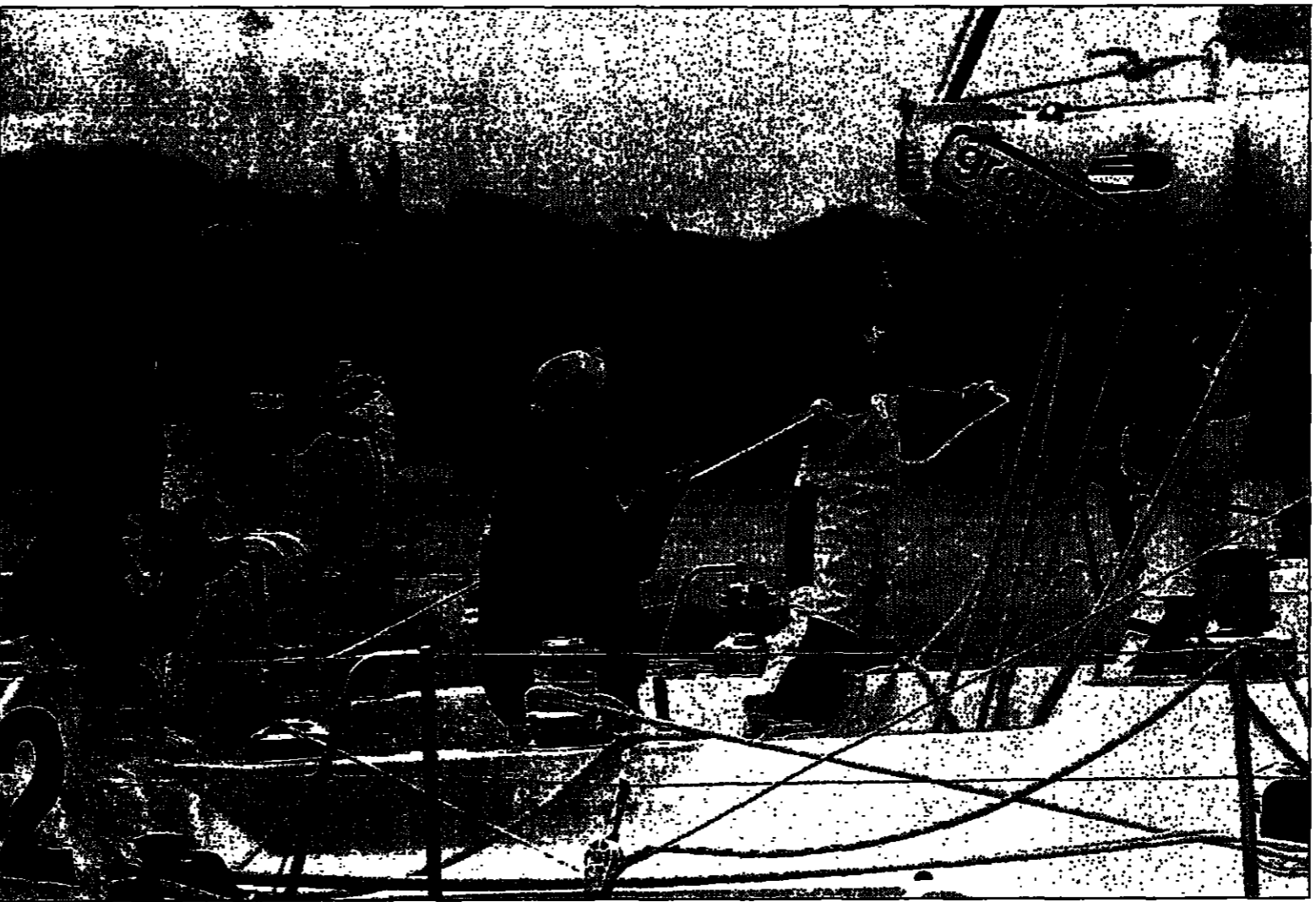
panion. "She always was the most important thing in my tennis. I hope it stays like that. She is not only my tennis coach, she is a terrific person."

Hingis was speaking in Perth before helping Marc Rosset, handicapped by back trouble, overcome Romania 2-1 in Switzerland's opening match in the Hopman Cup.

Tim Henman, the British No. 1, warmed up for next month's Australian Open by beating the Austrian qualifier Herbert Wiltschnig 6-3, 6-2 in the first round of the Qatar Open in Doha.

In Adelaide, the defending champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov fell to a shock defeat on the opening day of the Australian Men's Hard Court Championships when he was beaten 6-2, 6-2 by the world No. 47 Mikael Tillström of Sweden in only 49 minutes.

Greg Rusedski, Britain's No. 2, pulled out on the eve of the tournament because of blisters.



Clap hands on deck... the crew of Group 4 show their delight as she crosses the line in Wellington harbour yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: MARK PEPPER

Ice Hockey

# Police review Leach injury

Vic Batchelder

**P**OLICE have asked to see a video of the controversial Boxing Day game between Sheffield Steelers and Cardiff Devils in which Steelers' Canadian forward Jamie Leach suffered a double fracture of his left cheekbone.

Leach complained to the South Yorkshire force about the incident, involving Devils' Great Britain captain Shannon Hope, who was dismissed from the game for the "high stick" offence that caused the injury. Steelers lost the match 3-2.

A Steelers spokesman said last night that the police had requested a video of the game. Copies were being made, he said, and would be passed to the club's solicitors.

Meanwhile Mike Blaisdell, Nottingham Panthers' coach, may be reassessing their Superleague ambitions. The title was out of their reach, he said three weeks ago when they won the B&H Cup, because they had "concentrated on a few league games" to concentrate on the cup.

Sunday's 9-5 home win over the Newcastle Cobras, though, was Panthers' fourth victory in six games since then. And they have gained a

point in each of the other two, including Saturday's 3-2 overtime defeat at Sheffield. Also under Superleague rules, teams losing in overtime retain the point they would have gained for the draw at the end of regulation time.

Panthers' Paul Adney and Marty Dallman both achieved hat-tricks as Newcastle were beaten and afterwards Blaisdell rightly claimed the score "actually dattered them [Cobras]". He said Nottingham had "played as well as we have all season".

Now they are in fourth place, although the 11-point margin between them and league-leading Cardiff probably means Blaisdell's title prediction will prove accurate.

But as the Superleague moves into the second year of its existence, he said his league-leading counterpart, the Great Britain coach Peter Woods, share the same concern for its future, namely that those in charge must take a broader-based view, putting the overall good of the league and the protection of the smaller clubs above the interests of their own clubs.

"In bidding for players we've created a total free-agent system. The NHL would have collapsed years ago under a similar circumstances," Blaisdell said.

# Group 4 drifts in to second victory

**G**ROUP 4 maintained her dominance of the FT Global Challenge when she led the other 13 yachts into Wellington harbour yesterday to take the second leg after 40 days' sailing from Rio de Janeiro.

Also the winner of the first leg, she was greeted by a cannon, bagpipes and more than 500 spectators.

Captained by Mike Golding, Group 4 had made slow progress in the final stages because of abnor-

mally calm conditions and drifted across the finish line only seven miles ahead of Save the Children, which had cut the lead by about 40 miles.

Grant Winfield, a New Zealander on board Group 4, had told his crew-mates about Wellington's notoriously windy weather. "They asked me about windy Wellington and I said, 'Yes, it gets pretty windy there,' and all of a sudden we came round the

corner and that was it, it died. Fifteen hours later we're still sitting there and I was getting grief about it."

"In the last hour we could see Save the Children in the distance so there was definitely huge relief when we crossed the line."

"It was a great trip. We didn't have too much rough weather, and generally we had about 25-30 knots [of wind]. It did quiet down every now and then but we had up to 45 knots."

Winfield declined to be drawn on whether Group 4 would win the race, which goes the "wrong way" around the world. "There are four legs to go and it's still anybody's race."

Celebrations were expected to continue over the next five days despite an overnight tragedy in Wellington harbour, where four people died and one was missing after a fishing boat and a container ship collided.



Golding... winning skipper

# A bad tackle from behind is like an elephant...

Robert Pryce kept his ears flapping for the wit of '96 — not all of it from the Prime Minister

So all credit to Terry, all credit to those players and may I continue it. — Glenn Hoddie's first touch of the season

'This has had to come from my heart, not my head; my head said said him out. — Hoddie on Gazzà

If you believe that life goes on afterwards, is the spirit black, is it yellow, is it pink, is it white, that's the main issue. And I've got a belief that life does go on afterwards, and it's made it easier for me and it's helped me to explain these things to other people that might have a problem. — Hoddie on racism

You need a degree in kinesiology to argue in this business. — Pumas Elvades, bus-jumped after a 24-hour telephone chat with Don King about a Lennox Lewis-Mike Tyson fight. Nothing was settled

I've the body of a man half my age. Unfortunately he's in terrible shape. — George Foreman, WBV heavyweight champion

The British press hate a winner who's British. They don't like any British man to have balls as big as a cow's like I have. — Nigel Benn

I am genial but I am also mad. — Friso Stalsthoof, Bulgarian striker

It was noticeable that only two of the team who started against Switzerland last night were under 30. — musings of

Craig Brown, who selected that Scotland team

It's 2,000 of us against 70,000 drunkards. — Javier Clemente calls Spain for the England game

Don't worry. The next six years'll fly by. — Stuart Pearce to Gareth Southgate, whose penalty shoot-out miss ended England's Euro 96 run

I'm Barcelona-bound, baby! — Dennis Mitchell after winning the US Olympic trial 100 metres in Atlanta, where the Games were to be held

During the Hendry match something just clicked in my mind. This game is all between the ears. — Dave Harold, witness all season until beating Stephen Hendry in the Royal Welsh Open

Jalabert put in such a sprint race that he gained about 20 seconds immediately. There was nothing I could do. It was awesome. If I had tried to stay with him I would have blown my nuts off. — Chris Boardman on the Paris-Nice

The team spirit is fantastic. It is just disappointing that we are not carrying it on to the field. — Leeds coach Dean Bell

I was totally unaware of the commotion and I realised there was trouble only when somebody's body, which was apparently thrown from somewhere near the entrance, landed on my back. — Ben Otkurro, Deputy Speaker

# American Football Packers block 49ers' way

Mark Tran in New York

**O**N A wet and windy afternoon in San Francisco the usually potent 49ers offense managed only two touchdowns against the Philadelphia Eagles but that was enough to earn them a date with the Green Bay Packers on the frozen wastes of Lambeau Field.

The Packers knocked the 49ers out last year and look set to do the same on Saturday as they are virtually unbeatable at home.

San Francisco and the Eagles, who were quite evenly matched, had to deal with pelting rain and wind gusts of up to 65mph. Defense dominated and scoring opportunities were scarce; the difference was that the 49ers took their chances whereas the Eagles squandered theirs.

The Eagles advanced into the 49ers' red zone three times but always came away empty-handed. Ty Detmer, their quarterback, twice threw an interception at the goal-line, and they missed a field-goal attempt on the third occasion.

Steve Young at quarterback was outstanding for the 49ers, scrambling all game despite bruising ribs when he clattered past defenders for a nine-yard touchdown in the second quarter.

Young grimaced whenever he was hit and some of his throws revealed his discomfort. But he stayed in and combined with Jerry Rice on a couple of scintillating plays that included a three-yard

American Football

# Packers block 49ers' way

touchdown pass in the third quarter.

"We played very effective mud football today," said Young. "I don't care what the stats say, we played an effective ball game. The defense comes up with some big plays and we go home with a 14-0 win."

It was the first time the Eagles had failed to score since losing to the Washington Redskins in 1991. "This was not a good game for Ty," said Ray Rhodes, their coach. "And I think everyone knows that. The turnovers in the red area, you can't do that, you can't

leave that area without any points." Detmer was replaced by Mark Ryan in the third quarter after injuring a hamstring in being sacked.

The play-off picture is now complete. In the National Football Conference the 49ers play the Packers while the Carolina Panthers host the defending Super Bowl champions, the Dallas Cowboys, in the American Football Conference the Pittsburgh Steelers face the New England Patriots at Foxboro Stadium while the Denver Broncos entertain the Jacksonville Jaguars.

# Team talk

The independent news and reports service

0891 33 77+

Arsenal	06	Ipswich Town	19	Sheffield United	15
Aston Villa	11	Leeds United	03	Sheffield Wed.	14
Birm. City	34	Leicester City	35	Southampton	20
Blackburn	21	Liverpool	04	Stoke City	30
Bolton	36	Man. City	02	Sunderland	27
Burnford	24	Man. United	01	Tottenham Hot.	07
Burnley	01	Middlesbrough	23	West Ham	12
Chelsea	08	Millwall	29	Wimbledon	26
Coventry City	17	Newcastle Utd	16	Wolves	37
Derby County	28	Norwich City	18	Cardiff	09
Everton	05	Notm. Forest	13	Rangers	10
Hudd. Town	32	QPR	25		

CALLS COST 50P PER MIN MON-FRI, 6AM-9PM AND 45P PER MIN AT ALL OTHER TIMES. SUPPLIED BY: IBS, 15 YORK LANE, LEEDS LS1 5LR. HELPLINE: 0171 713 4470

The Guardian INTERACTIVE



Cup fighters courting trouble, page 14  
The smart Sir Alec, page 15

Everton back in transfer market, page 14  
Hingis eyes Graf crown, page 15

# SportsGuardian

MOVE OVER ALAN BALL, ASA HARTFORD, STEVE COPPELL AND PHIL NEAL...

## Clark steps in to City - boots and all

Sam Ross

FRANK CLARK became the latest hopeful to tread a familiar path yesterday when he became Manchester City's fifth manager this season.

Less than a fortnight after leaving Nottingham Forest, Clark has been asked to undertake a damage-limitation exercise at Maine Road. A task which he himself described as "very difficult" begins at Birmingham City tomorrow, where if they lose they could sink even nearer to the bottom of the First Division.

This season City's first-team affairs have been handled by Alan Ball, who resigned in late August, Steve Coppell, who quit in November after only 33 days in charge, and the caretakers Asa Hartford and Phil Neal.

And as the 53-year-old Clark was installed as City's 15th full-time manager in 25 years, there was another departure: Tony Book was sacked after 30 years as player, manager, caretaker manager and, latterly, first-team coach.

"The decision had nothing to do with me," said Clark, who is expected shortly to invite his assistants at Forest, Alan Hill and Liam O'Kane, to join him at Maine Road.

Despite City's perilous position, Clark said he was delighted with his new assignment. "Why did I take the job? I was out of work and I do need to work," he said. "This was always going to be a massive opportunity for someone and I am pleased that someone is me."

"Manchester City has enormous potential. I know that's said of all clubs but on Boxing Day they attracted a crowd of 30,000 and at the weekend they took 6,000 supporters to Barnsley. The club needs stabilising but, even so, it doesn't sound like a job from hell to me."

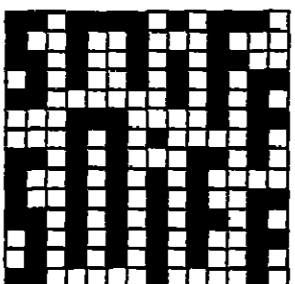
Clark is believed to have about £10 million to help regenerate the senior squad. His first act as manager will be to try to sign Forest's reserve-team goalkeeper Tommy Wright, currently on loan at Reading.

The size of Clark's job became immediately clear when he was asked to outline his ambitions. "I am sure that we can avoid relegation," he said. "I haven't actually seen City play this season but have been told they are lacking in confidence. I am just hoping that some of the players are simply underachieving."

"My job is to realise what potential there already is here and then to add to it when I feel it is necessary."

Clark's appointment may come to represent a watershed because although his 3½-year contract worth £5,000 a week was apparently negotiated by Francis Lee, the City chairman's influence appears to be waning. It is believed Clark was the choice of City's new majority shareholder Stephen Bolter; Lee had spent the previous four weeks negotiating with the former Leeds manager Howard Wilkinson.

More soccer, page 14



THE UNBLOCKER



Putting his best foot forward... Frank Clark, City's 15th full-time manager in 25 years, arrives at Maine Road yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL STEELE

## Captains at daggers drawn as series ends under dark cloud

David Hopps in Harare

ENGLAND'S disastrous overseas record in recent years means there are few places left in the world where they can be accused of a superiority complex. If only it would happen after a Test series in Australia. Instead the charge was levelled yesterday by Zimbabwe's captain Alistair Campbell as a drawn Test series degenerated into a game of little victories.

Michael Atherton's determination to present England as moral victors — claiming that had the weather not intervened they would have won both Tests, in Bulawayo and here — had a good deal of logic on its side but left Campbell infuriated at what he regarded as patronising English attitudes.

"All this gets under my skin," he said after overnight rain had ruled out the final day's play with the second Test at Harare Sports Club intriguingly poised. "England should accept their superiority complex and accept that both sides were evenly matched. I don't think there's too much to choose between New Zealand, England, and ourselves at the moment."

As Zimbabwe are rated as the weakest Test nation in the world, with New Zealand and England generally regarded as the two countries just above them, Campbell's assessment was damning. However much England dressed things up, in his mind they had now joined Zimbabwe at the bottom of the pile. "You're as Bad As We Are. You could almost smell the tabloid headlines."

Campbell and Atherton are not natural soul mates. Atherton is the detached Oxford graduate who chooses his words carefully and who is most relaxed when he is socialising with close friends. Campbell is readily identifiable as a blunt and uncomplicated southern African who needs no second invitation to speak his mind.

Atherton also recognises the political importance of presenting a drawn series in the best possible light. It is less than two months, after

### Full Harare scoreboard

ENGLAND		ZIMBABWE		ENGLAND	
First innings		First innings		Second innings	
N V Knight c A Flower b Olonga	46	N V Knight c Crawley b Gough	76	N V Knight c Campbell b Strang	60
M Atherton c Campbell b Whittall	12	M Atherton c Campbell b Whittall	10	M Atherton c Campbell b Strang	101
T A J Stewart c G W Flower b Strang	18	T A J Stewart c G W Flower b Strang	10	T A J Stewart c G W Flower b Strang	101
N Hussain c Flower b Strang	11	N Hussain c Flower b Strang	10	N Hussain c Flower b Strang	60
G P Thorpe c Ollie b Strang	11	G P Thorpe c Ollie b Strang	10	G P Thorpe c Ollie b Strang	60
J P Crawley not out	47	J P Crawley not out	47	J P Crawley not out	7
C White c Campbell b Whittall	8	C White c Campbell b Whittall	8	C White c Campbell b Whittall	7
R D B Croft c G W Flower b Whittall	14	R D B Croft c G W Flower b Whittall	14	R D B Croft c G W Flower b Whittall	7
D Gough b Strang	2	D Gough b Strang	2	D Gough b Strang	7
A Mubally c S b Whittall	0	A Mubally c S b Whittall	0	A Mubally c S b Whittall	0
P C R Tufnell b Strang	9	P C R Tufnell b Strang	9	P C R Tufnell b Strang	0
Extras (lb, w, nb)	16	Extras (lb, w, nb)	16	Extras (lb, w, nb)	16
Total (23.1 overs)	166	Total (23.1 overs)	166	Total (23.1 overs)	166
Fall of wickets: 24, 53, 56, 73, 94, 128, 133, 154.		Fall of wickets: 5, 48, 110, 121, 126, 128, 133, 157, 211.		Fall of wickets: 7, 75, 85.	
Reversing Strang 24, 1-7-43-4; Brander 19-25-2; Ollie 1-29-2; Whittall 16-5-19-4; Strang 18-7-31-1.		Reversing Mubally 25-7-32-1; Gough 16-5-19-4; Croft 15-2-33-2; Whittall 16-5-19-4; Tufnell 15-2-33-2.		Reversing Strang 16-5-47-1; Brander 21-4-45-0; Ollie 7-0-31-5; Whittall 1-0-19-0; Strang 25-6-42-2; G W Flower 1-0-4-0.	
		Umpires R Tiffin and K V Francis.		Match abandoned as a draw.	

all, since the former chairman of selectors Raymond Illingworth warned that if England could not win in Zimbabwe they really would be in a mess.

"Win, and so what? Lose and be pilloried. From the outset for England this has been the no-win tour."

Campbell has no such complications; with so few players of Test quality to choose from, he cannot even be accused of picking the wrong side. He would rather slap his opponent on the back, invite him into the murky, hard-drinking bar of the Harare Sports Club, where the beer begins to flow soon after breakfast, and mark the end of a series by swilling down half a dozen bottles of Zambezi.

But it is vital for England's well-being that they depart for New Zealand next week with confidence intact, and Atherton's honest appraisal of the series addressed that need.

"If the matches had run their course we would have

emerged as the strongest team," he said. "But for two hours lost to rain in Bulawayo we would have won, and we would have won in Harare if it wasn't for the weather."

"We began both Tests badly but we have played positive cricket. We took up the challenge in the run chase in Bulawayo, and we would have taken up the challenge by declaring here. A drawn series doesn't put any more pressure on us. Three Tests in New Zealand gives us a better chance of a positive result in the series and I'm confident that we will win."

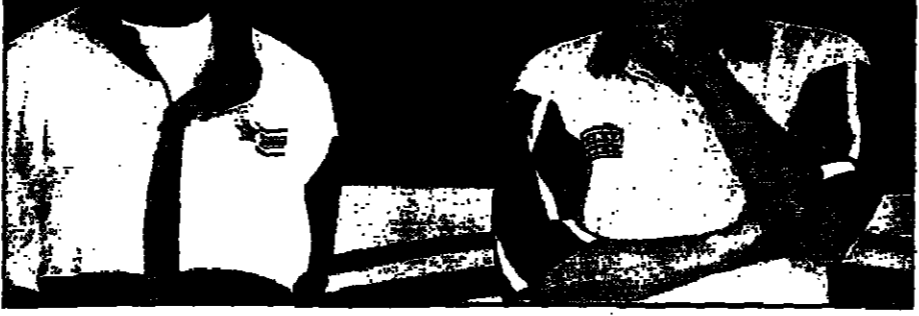
Campbell was irritated enough to accept an invitation to select a joint side from the two XIs and reluctantly included five Englishmen. He

opted, on current form, for Stewart (but only as a batsman), Knight, Crawley, Croft and Gough. Both Atherton and his vice-captain Hussain were omitted.

But what really infuriated Campbell was what has angered Zimbabwe's cricketing public for the past week: the outburst of David Lloyd, England's coach, after they failed by one run to win in Bulawayo.

"For them to say 'We murdered you and you know it' is clutching at thin air," he said. "As far as I'm concerned they are just trying to keep the press satisfied or to con themselves. It becomes quite monotonous and goes on guys up."

One wonders how enthusiastically England will look forward to a return to Zimbabwe. This may be one of the more relaxed places on earth but it is doubtful whether England have ever realised it.



On bad terms... captains Alistair Campbell and Michael Atherton. PHOTOGRAPH: STU FORSTER

## First Man who needs a sting in his tale



Richard Williams

IT TOOK Mike Atherton a long time to live down the few seconds in which he entered the name of Milan Kundera on the dotted line marked "Favourite author" in the Cricketers' Who's Who a few years ago.

So it was a little surprising to see him giving another hostage to fortune by volunteering the information, on the eve of England's departure for Zimbabwe, that he had packed *The First Man*, the autobiographical novel on which Albert Camus, the well-known goalkeeper, was working when he died.

The First Man? This may, of course, have been in the nature of a wry joke about captains who also open the batting. Or, facing his fourth winter on tour as England's skipper, he may understandably have come over a bit existential.

At any rate he will have been amused by the passage, about a third of the way through the book, when the protagonist — the boy Jacques Cormery, Camus's alter ego — sets off for a day's rabbit-hunting with his uncle and a group of friends. "All good fellows," the author reflects, "at least for this occasion, happy to have escaped for a day from the workshop, from small overcrowded apartments, sometimes from their wives too, uninhibited and in a mood of amused tolerance that is peculiar to men when they have got together among themselves for some brief violent pleasure... On these Sundays, Jacques learned that the company of men was good and could nourish the soul."

Just like a cricket tour, really. And let us hope that the company of Atherton's fellow professionals, denied the presence of their partners, has nourished his soul, which must have endured torments beyond his wildest imaginations since he answered England's call in the summer of 1988, halfway through an Ashes series.

From a distance, the latest ordeal has seemed no less confusing and humiliating than every other winter tour this decade. Assuming he survives as captain after the New Zealand leg of the present excur-

sion, Atherton will approach his second home series against Australia — and, in effect, the end of a four-year cycle — without having convinced anyone that English cricket has made any real progress from the state in which Ted Dexter and Graham Gooch left it.

When Atherton took the job, he was popularly supposed to be a golden boy, a player without apparent effort. In his own mind, however, his career had always been a matter of peaks and troughs. It was three years ago in the Caribbean, on his first tour as captain, that he spoke to me about losing his youthful sense of "invincibility" when he was first laid low by what turned out to be a chronic back problem.

"Up until then I'd always been good physically at whatever I'd done," he said. "I was a good cricketer, and although I'm not saying I was special at other sports, I was always competent, always competitive. I'd win on the golf course, I'd win on the pool table, all that kind of thing. I was fairly confident of my own physical abilities." Then the injury came along, and suddenly it could have been the end of my career. That's when the doubts start to come into your mind."

He was still several months away from the dirt-to-the-poolside business, which was given his second shield — the virtually unanimous approval of fans, officials and fellow players — disintegrated overnight. "It's not many times that an England captain could say that he had full official and public support, with no threat to his job," he said at the time. "That's certainly not the case now, and it's my fault."

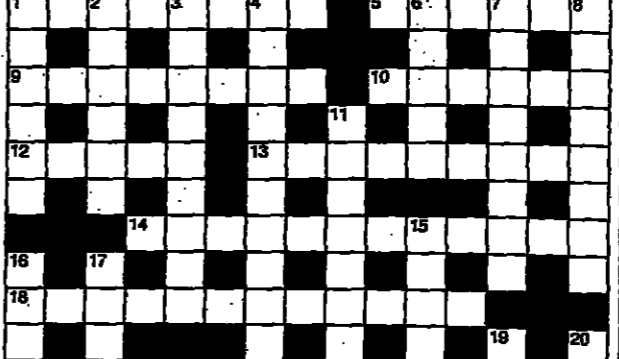
Correctly, he was given the benefit of the doubt. And eventually his obduracy allowed him to see off the meddlesome presence of Ray Illingworth. But from today's perspective his tenure seems to have consisted of getting rid of obstructions without erecting anything substantial in their place.

ATHERTON and David Lloyd have a lot to do, and not much time in which to do it. If they are to convince us of their fitness to lead England out against Australia in the first Test at Edgbaston on June 5.

An isolated victory will not be enough. We have celebrated those before under Atherton, and each turned out to be a false dawn. Now, in New Zealand, we need evidence of real collective progress if the final page of the Atherton saga is not to leave both him and us in mid-air.

### Guardian Crossword No 20,848

Set by Auracaria



- Across
- Cop-out in the family: it could hold water (6)
  - Publicity about pig going by sea (6)
  - Little time to phone going by road (6)
  - Make a choice by keeping arbitrator (6)
  - Nothing that exists for a group (6)
  - Wrong clue — a hint — it's wrong (6)
  - Group of a lot of cremated ashes? (8,4)
  - Absent without leave, back in the drink, worse than usual? (5,7)
  - Joint problem for non-U king — it exists (6)
  - Difficult? Too bad! (5)
  - I mostly see a quarter of a yard, which is folly (6)
- Down
- Cake and roll, possibly as hot inside (4,4)
  - Victims of a war that diverted the Severn (6)
  - Armaments exhausted around river to the North (6)
  - Call the lot for the day (6)
  - Exceeding the right is stupid (6)
  - Bottle opener for Irish prison officer (6)
  - Behaviour with something clinging about it, transmitting power (12)
  - Punishment comes between John and society (6)
  - A catalyst isn't unnatural (6)
  - Ship's boy in backyard with bird's brunette (4,4)
  - Its constituents could be fewer, at least — but they won't be (7,5)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,847

1 DOWN: WINDMILL  
2 DOWN: BURNING  
3 DOWN: BURNING  
4 DOWN: BURNING  
5 DOWN: BURNING  
6 DOWN: BURNING  
7 DOWN: BURNING  
8 DOWN: BURNING  
9 DOWN: BURNING  
10 DOWN: BURNING  
11 DOWN: BURNING  
12 DOWN: BURNING  
13 DOWN: BURNING  
14 DOWN: BURNING  
15 DOWN: BURNING  
16 DOWN: BURNING  
17 DOWN: BURNING  
18 DOWN: BURNING  
19 DOWN: BURNING  
20 DOWN: BURNING  
21 DOWN: BURNING  
22 DOWN: BURNING  
23 DOWN: BURNING  
24 DOWN: BURNING  
25 DOWN: BURNING  
26 DOWN: BURNING  
27 DOWN: BURNING  
28 DOWN: BURNING  
29 DOWN: BURNING  
30 DOWN: BURNING  
31 DOWN: BURNING  
32 DOWN: BURNING  
33 DOWN: BURNING  
34 DOWN: BURNING  
35 DOWN: BURNING  
36 DOWN: BURNING  
37 DOWN: BURNING  
38 DOWN: BURNING  
39 DOWN: BURNING  
40 DOWN: BURNING  
41 DOWN: BURNING  
42 DOWN: BURNING  
43 DOWN: BURNING  
44 DOWN: BURNING  
45 DOWN: BURNING  
46 DOWN: BURNING  
47 DOWN: BURNING  
48 DOWN: BURNING  
49 DOWN: BURNING  
50 DOWN: BURNING  
51 DOWN: BURNING  
52 DOWN: BURNING  
53 DOWN: BURNING  
54 DOWN: BURNING  
55 DOWN: BURNING  
56 DOWN: BURNING  
57 DOWN: BURNING  
58 DOWN: BURNING  
59 DOWN: BURNING  
60 DOWN: BURNING  
61 DOWN: BURNING  
62 DOWN: BURNING  
63 DOWN: BURNING  
64 DOWN: BURNING  
65 DOWN: BURNING  
66 DOWN: BURNING  
67 DOWN: BURNING  
68 DOWN: BURNING  
69 DOWN: BURNING  
70 DOWN: BURNING  
71 DOWN: BURNING  
72 DOWN: BURNING  
73 DOWN: BURNING  
74 DOWN: BURNING  
75 DOWN: BURNING  
76 DOWN: BURNING  
77 DOWN: BURNING  
78 DOWN: BURNING  
79 DOWN: BURNING  
80 DOWN: BURNING  
81 DOWN: BURNING  
82 DOWN: BURNING  
83 DOWN: BURNING  
84 DOWN: BURNING  
85 DOWN: BURNING  
86 DOWN: BURNING  
87 DOWN: BURNING  
88 DOWN: BURNING  
89 DOWN: BURNING  
90 DOWN: BURNING  
91 DOWN: BURNING  
92 DOWN: BURNING  
93 DOWN: BURNING  
94 DOWN: BURNING  
95 DOWN: BURNING  
96 DOWN: BURNING  
97 DOWN: BURNING  
98 DOWN: BURNING  
99 DOWN: BURNING  
100 DOWN: BURNING

But wait, what's this? It's a delicious Cézanne-wich — still in its commemorative wrapper! A Provençal-style crabstick and goat's dropping triple-decker, left over from that memorable day spent queuing for Cézanne at the Tate.

Adrian Searle

G2 page 12

مكتبة من الادب